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THE
HISTORY OF IRELAND,
FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD OF
THE IRISH ANNALS TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY
THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.,
&c. &c. &c.

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DEATH OF ST. PATRICK.

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TO
THE PRESENT TIME.

BY THO^S WRIGHT, ESQ. M.A. F.S.A. &c.
^{Cpt. 1.1}

AUTHOR OF "ENGLAND UNDER THE HOUSE OF HANOVER" "THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA LITTEARIA"
AND OTHER WORKS ILLUSTRATIVE OF ENGLISH HISTORY



King Cormac and the Fair Enchanted

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DEATH OF BRIAN BORU.



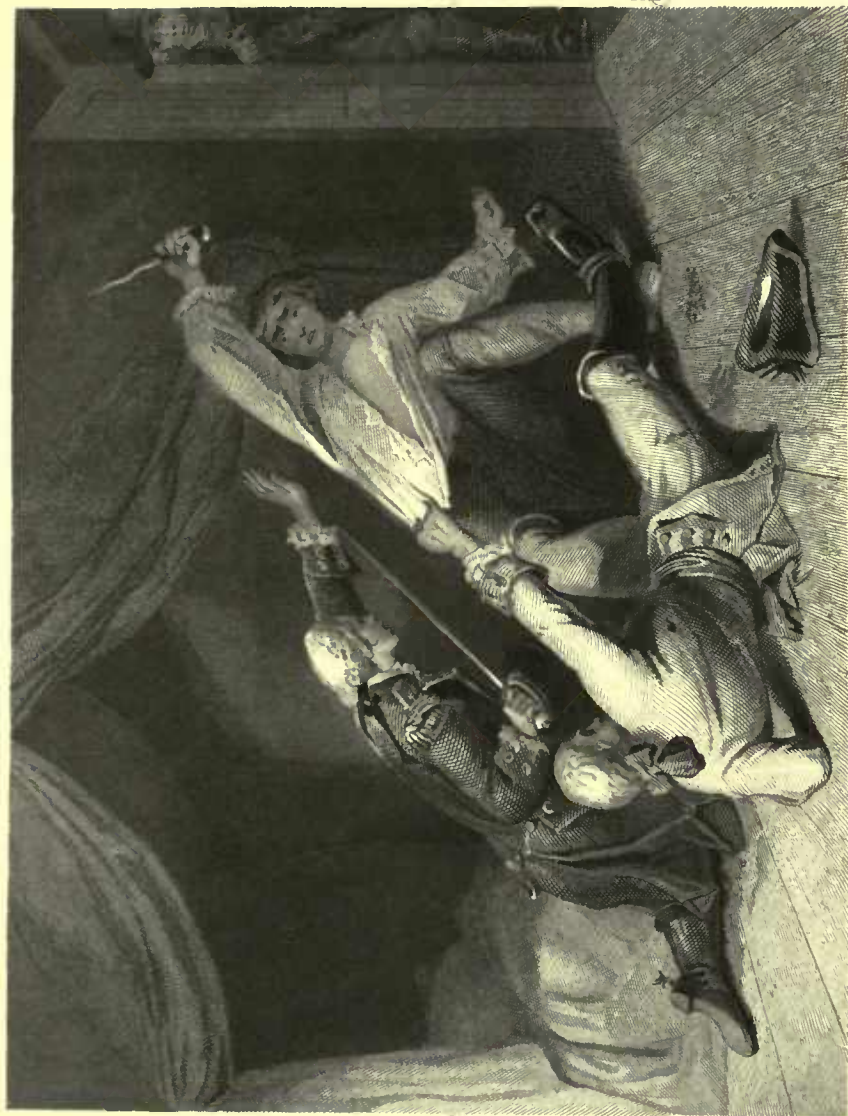
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THE KING OF THOMOND DOING HOMAGE TO HENRY II.

HENRY II. PRESENTING THE POPE'S BULL, TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL.

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THE CAPTURE OF LORD ARTHUR BY THE GREEN ANVIERCHIEF.



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PROCESSION OF MARINERS

WALLING OF NEW ROSS.



IRELAND'S GOLDEN AGE.

(IN THE REIGN OF KING BRIAN BORU. 1001.)

"RICH AND FAIR WERE THE GEMS SHE WORE,
AND A BRIGHT GOLD RING ON HER WAND SHE BORE."



RICHARD EARL OF PEMBROKE TAKES LEAVE OF HIS BROTHER.



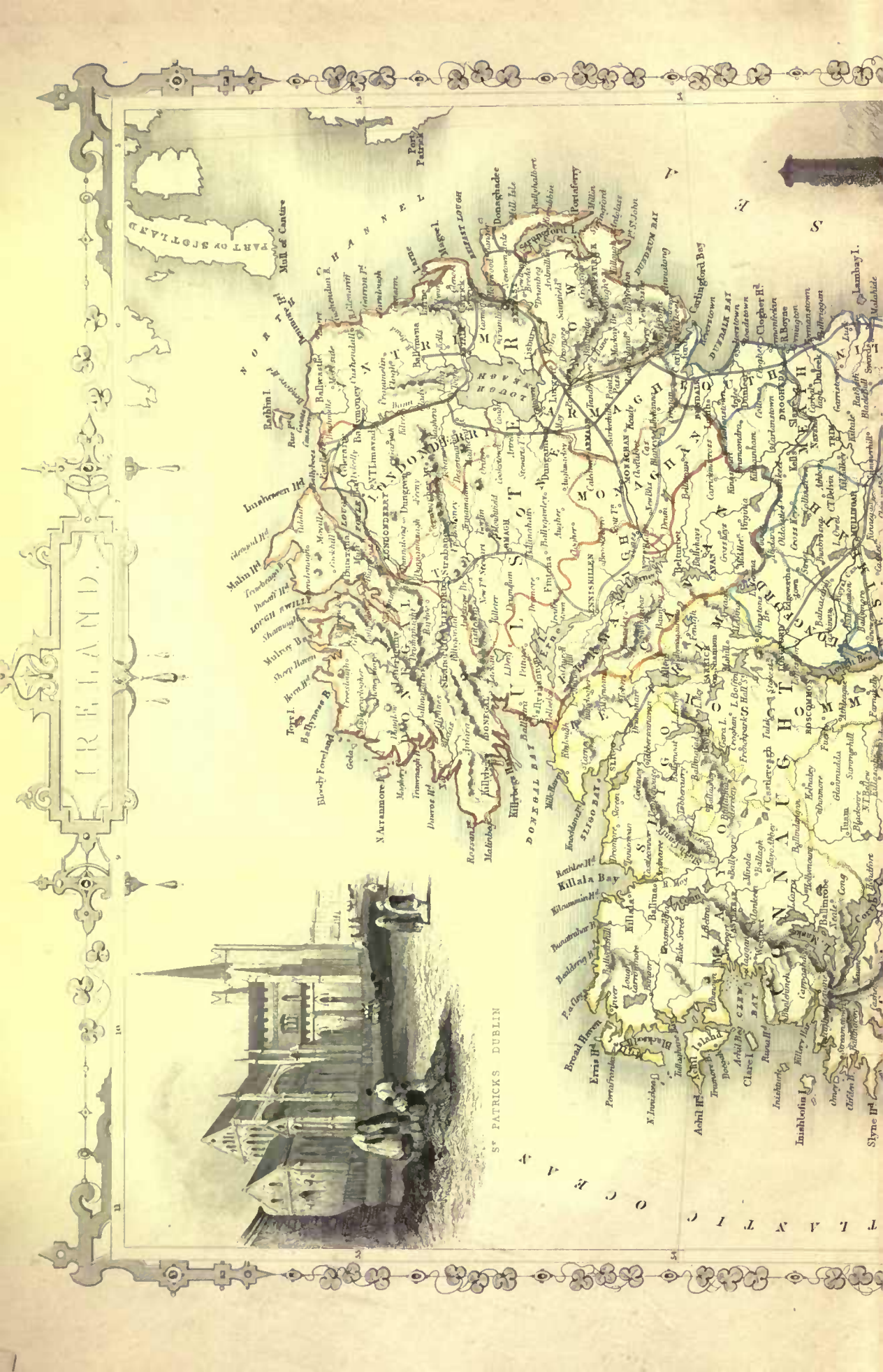
IRELANDER

FOR THE BIRTH OF THE NEW IRELAND
AND THE RISE OF THE NEW IRELAND
AND A BRIGHT GOLD RING ON THE FINGER OF THE NEW IRELAND



RICHARD EARL OF PEMBROKE TAKING LEAVE OF HIS BROTHER.





IRELAND.



ST. PATRICK'S DUBLIN



The Map Drawn & Engraved by J. Rogie.

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THE
HISTORY OF IRELAND.

INTRODUCTION.



THE history of all nations depends on so great a variety of documents of different degrees of merit or authenticity, that to understand properly the character of the history of any particular people, it is necessary to have some notion of that of its historical records, or, in other words, we require in some degree to know the national literature of the people whose history we would appreciate. Strictly speaking, the whole circle of the national literature of a country belongs to its history; and in the earlier ages of society the historian is obliged to take this definition in its widest extent, although in periods of higher civilization historical literature forms a special and strongly defined class. In Ireland, owing to circumstances peculiar to that country, we find in its historical records at a very late period a singular mixture of the imaginative character of the earlier, with the prosaic accuracy of the later period.

The various races and tribes who formed the chief portion of the population of modern Europe had no written literature before their conversion to Christianity; and hence they adopted the alphabets of Rome or Greece, according to the country of the missionaries who were their teachers. The letters which they possessed before were calculated only for cutting inscriptions on wood or stone. They were those elaborately formed characters which among the Anglo-Saxons and Germans are known by the name of Runes, and which the Irish designated by the synonymous word in their language, Oghams. The literature of all people in this state of society was preserved only by the memory, and was passed from one to another, and from generation to generation, orally; its preservation being the particular duty of an important and very influential order, who are commonly designated by the name of bards or poets. It was their business to commemorate the mythic stories relating to the origin of their tribe, as well as its great exploits or misfortunes at a later period, the latter, though exaggerated and disfigured in accordance with their prejudices and passions, belonging much more to what we strictly consider as history than the former, although the transition from one to the other is almost imperceptible. These, however, were the only materials upon which the early history of all nations was founded.

The books which were first written by the Christian missionaries were copies of the Gospels or of the Psalms in Latin, some of which, owing to their extreme beauty, to

their reputed sanctity, and to other circumstances, have been preserved to modern times, and the Irish, like the Anglo-Saxons, possess such manuscripts dating from a period approximating to that of their first conversion. It was a long time subsequent to this before the vernacular language of the people was committed to writing in anything but brief notes and glosses to assist the teacher in explaining the Latin text. The old order and the new one—the bard and the Christian priest—continued to live together without so much of rivalry as might be expected, the bard gradually resigning the religious part of his character to the priest, while the priest left the commemoration of historical events as the special province of the bard; and this state of things lasted during a longer or shorter period, according to the slowness or rapidity of the march of civilization. In Ireland it has continued to a very late period; and hence, while among the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks, and most of the branches of the Germanic race, the creations of the bards soon began to be regarded in their true light of romances, in Ireland the popular conviction that they were strictly historic has hardly yet been overthrown. The modern historian of that country has thus to deal with a great mass of materials which his judgment repudiates, although popular belief or prejudice will not allow them to be neglected.

The work of the bare annalist of contemporary events began at a later period, and originated with the priest or monk. All the older chronicles are strictly monastic chronicles, and they dwell most on such events as were interesting to the religious house in which they were written, or at least which affected the interests of the church; and they are written with prejudiced feelings, which we have not always the means of detecting. They are only absolutely authentic from the time at which we can prove them to have been written contemporarily, the earlier portion being compiled from tradition, abridged from the bardic songs, or copied from some other chronicle. For it was the common practice, when a monkish writer undertook to make a chronicle for the use of his monastery, to borrow the chronicle of some other house, and copy nearly literally all the entries previous to the date at which he began writing it; so that, among our old chronicles, a large portion of them is copied from one another. This circumstance shows how necessary it is that, in examining the historical records of former ages, we should make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the literary history of the records themselves, so as to be able to appreciate the materials from which they were compiled, and to know how far they are in each case independent of the other existing authorities which were partly compiled from the same materials. It is not unusual to find a modern historical writer quoting four or five authorities as supporting each other's testimony to the truth of a fact, when, in reality, they are all mere copies from one original chronicler, who is himself not deserving of our trust.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that the bardic poetry, perhaps from the old deeply rooted habits of the order, was never committed more than partially to writing, and that accidentally, and probably not at the choice of the bards in whose memory it was preserved. Among the Anglo-Saxons in England we find no traces of written poetry of this kind till the tenth and eleventh centuries, when poems or fragments of poems were taken down from recitation by a person here and there, who was curious in collecting such things, as we now collect scraps of poetry into albums; and one or two of these collections have been preserved, from the circumstance of their having been given

to the library of a public body. It appears that the same practice began in Ireland about the same time, and that it prevailed in that country during the subsequent period much more extensively than in most other countries. In fact, the bardic order, which had always flourished there more than in the surrounding lands, became divided then into two classes, which are constantly mentioned in the native chronicles, the poets or minstrels and the historians, and which were still often combined, as we find one man frequently described as the poet and historian of his tribe, and, as in the older bardic class, the character of poet or historian continued to be hereditary. It is to the latter we owe the written materials of history.

Two collections of Irish bardic poems of the description just alluded to have attained an extraordinary celebrity among Irish writers under the names of the **PSALTER OF TARA** and the **PSALTER OF CASHEL**. The first of these is mentioned by the old annalists as a book of great antiquity; it is ascribed by some to a period antecedent to the Christian era, while others attribute it to the reign of Cormac, in the third century after Christ, and it is said to have been preserved at the royal palace at Tara, and to have been continued by the bardic historians at subsequent periods. This book had ceased to exist long before we have any information of an authentic description relating to it, and its history seems to be enwrapped in obscurity and fable; we only know that it is pretended that some portion of it was copied into the **Psalter of Cashel**, and as the latter book is known to have consisted in part of bardic poetry, there may have been a still older collection of such poetry preserved at Tara. The **Book of Cashel**, so called from its having been preserved in the cathedral of that city, and believed to have been compiled by Cormac mac Cuilénan, king of Munster and archbishop of Cashel at the beginning of the tenth century, appears without any doubt to have been a very early manuscript, and was the first record of which we have any authentic information of the bardic poetry of the Irish, and of the romantic history which composes the earlier portion of their annals. Copies of it were certainly in existence in the seventeenth century, of which Geoffrey Keating made extensive use in his history of the fabulous periods of the Irish Annals, and they are said to be still preserved, although there appears to be some uncertainty as to the depository which conceals them from the knowledge of the public. However, the original work was used subsequently in the compilation of similar books by others of the early Irish writers.

The materials contained in the **Book or Psalter of Cashel** related more especially to the history of Munster; and another work, said to have been little more than a copy of the **Psalter of Cashel**, was known as the **BOOK OF MUNSTER**. The other great principalities of the island possessed similar compilations, written at various subsequent periods. The **BOOK OF LEINSTER**, which related more particularly to the affairs of that province, is still extant in a manuscript copy in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. The **BOOK OF ULSTER** and the **BOOK OF ORGIAL** contained similar collections relating to the northern parts of the island: and several similar manuscripts exist, or are known to have existed, relating to Meath and Connaught. Two much larger collections were made for the history of Sligo—the **BOOK OF LEACAN**, compiled at different periods from the twelfth century to the fifteenth, by the Mac Fírbíse, the hereditary poets and historians of Sligo, and the **BOOK OF BALLYMOTE**, compiled at the monastery of that name in the fourteenth century. These two works are preserved in the library of the

Royal Irish Academy; they include copies of the similar books which existed in the other great provinces—those of Cashel, Leinster, Ulster, and Orgial, besides the history of Ireland, and especially of Sligo and Connaught, down to the fifteenth century; and they were valued so much even at a late period, that the latter, which belonged originally to the Mac Donoughs, was purchased of them in 1522 by Hugh Duv O'Donnell of Donegal for *one hundred and forty milch cows*.

The important position held by the poetic and historical families in the various Irish septs, is proved by the care with which their deaths are recorded by the native chroniclers; and this circumstance also enables us in some cases to trace their direct descent from the old bardic caste. Like them they were often rich in landed property and in goods, and sometimes even they were chiefs of their sept. Thus the Mac Fimbises, who were the hereditary historians and poets of Hy-Fiachra in Sligo, and at one period of all Connaught, formed a separate clan, whose original territory was Magh-Broin in Tyrrawley, but who moved thence and finally settled at Leacan in the barony of Tireragh. The Book of Leacan was compiled by various members of this family during three centuries, and is said to be one of the most voluminous of the Irish chronicles. We learn from different annalists, that Awlave More mac Fimbis, historian (or *ollav*, as it was termed in Irish) of Hy-Fiachra, died in 1138; that Giolla Iosa More mac Fimbis, historian of the same district, died in 1279; that another Giolla Iosa mac Fimbis, Donogh mac Fimbis, and Fearbisigh mac Fimbis, all celebrated historians, died respectively in the years 1301, 1376, and 1379; and that Giolla Iosa More mac Fimbis, a "famous antiquary," of Leacan, and Mac Iosa mac Fimbis, a poet of the same clan, both died in 1418. The last of this family of antiquaries was Dubhaltach, or Duaid mac Fimbis, of Leacan, who was employed in making collections for sir James Ware, and who was murdered in 1670 at Dunflin in the county of Sligo. The O'Dalys were the hereditary poets of Westmeath, and are often mentioned in the Irish chronicles. The singular adventures of one of this family will be found recorded in the following history (p. 131 of the present volume). The O'Dugans were the hereditary bards and historians of the O'Kellys of Hy-Maine, as the O'Maolconrys were of the proud and powerful sept of the Siol-Murray, which exercised so great an influence over the never-ending revolutions of Connaught. Of the latter family, also, we find many notices in the native annalists. Tanaidhe O'Maolconry, celebrated as a poet and historian, is said to have died in 1136. Another "historian" of the same family, Neide O'Maolconry, flourished in the same century. Maoilin O'Maolconry, the historian of Siol-Murray, died in 1266. In 1270, Dubhsuileach O'Maolconry and Dunlaing O'Maolconry were removed from the dignity of chief historians of Connaught, and that honour was conferred upon Tanaidhe More O'Maolconry. In 1310, Torna O'Maolconry, as chief poet and historian of Connaught, attended at the inauguration of Feidlim O'Connor. Conaing O'Maolconry, "chief poet of Connaught," died in 1314; Tanaidhe O'Maolconry, "an eminent poet of Connaught," in 1385; Donough O'Maolconry, "chief poet of the O'Connors of Connaught," in 1404; Conaing O'Maolconry, "poet of Connaught," in 1420; Maoilin O'Maolconry, "chief poet of Connaught," in 1441; Tanaidhe O'Maolconry, "an eminent poet of Connaught," in 1446; Carbry O'Maolconry, "a famous historian of Connaught," in 1511; John O'Maolconry, dignified with the high-sounding title of "chief poet and historiographer of Ireland," in 1566; and Maurice O'Maolconry, an eminent poet of Connaught, died in

1600. Several members of this family became distinguished ecclesiastics, and one of them, Florence O'Maolconry, archbishop of Tuam, a Franciscan friar eminent for his learning, was the founder of the Irish Franciscan monastery at Louvain, and died at Madrid in 1629. We can trace down the bardic character of this family to a still later period, for Peter O'Maolconry was an eminent Irish poet at the beginning of the eighteenth century. A fine manuscript on vellum of bardic poems, written about the fourteenth century, and now preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, was compiled by the O'Maolconrys, although they appear in general to have worked more as annalists. To them we owe the *ANNALS OF CONNAUGHT*, a voluminous chronicle of that province from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, a copy of which is preserved among the manuscripts in the library of the Royal Irish Academy.

The Irish bibliographers give us long lists of Irish chronicles, many of which are extant, and many of which no longer exist, and are known only by name. The bards appear to have become annalists by slow gradation, and the only Irish chronicler we know previous to the twelfth century, is Tigernach O'Braoin, an ecclesiastic, and not apparently a member of any one of the bardic families. Tigernach was abbot of Clonmacnoise and Roscommon, and his death is placed by the Four Masters in the year 1088. This father of Irish annalists, shows himself so far free from the prejudices which seem to have been inseparable from the "antiquarianism" of the descendants of the bards, that he rejects the earlier fabulous history, and applies a certain spirit of criticism to the compilation of the subsequent annals. We have no very distinct notion whether any Irish chronicles, strictly such, existed previous to the compilation of the *ANNALS OF TIGERNACH*, and served for the foundation of that work, or whether the Irish history detailed in it was abridged from older bardic poetry and memorial verses, a class of documents which are frequently quoted by the compiler, and which are almost the only Irish authorities he mentions. Tigernach began his work with what he considered the commencement of the authentic history of his country, the reign of Kimbaoth, which he places three centuries before Christ (*omnia monumenta Scotorum usque Kimbaoth incerta erant*), and from that period he takes the foreign Latin chronicles then best known, and reduces the Irish history as well as he could to their chronology. The few manuscripts of this chronicle now extant are unfortunately mutilated in more than one place; but they end in the year 1088, the same in which their compiler is said to have died. They are written partly in Latin and partly in Irish, according to the sources from which the outlines of events were taken.

This is infinitely the most valuable of all our authorities for the early history of Ireland. The subsequent chronicles have generally more of a local character, and, unless where they copy Tigernach, are, as far as we can judge in ignorance of their materials, less authentic; they differ widely from him in their critical spirit, for they adopt all the early fables, and they borrow more largely from romance, but they preserve local traditions of importance, especially relating to times nearer those in which they wrote. They are all, however, valuable when they become contemporary historians, more valuable, indeed, from the circumstance that each gives the history of his own sept or province more fully and partially than the others. It is thus that one copy of the *ANNALS OF INISFALLEN*, the next in antiquity after those of Tigernach that are now extant, furnishes us with the best and most detailed account of the battle of Clontarf, in which the

great Brian Boru was slain. These annals were compiled in the year 1215, and commence with a brief chronicle from the beginning of the world to the time of St. Patrick, after which they are rather more detailed. They are continued in the manuscript from 1215 to 1320, by another hand. Compiled by a monk of the celebrated abbey of Inisfallen, they are naturally most copious on the affairs of Munster. The ANNALS OF BOYLE, compiled more briefly by a monk of the abbey of Boyle in Roscommon, in the year 1246, resemble much in their general character those of Inisfallen, and are also written partly in Latin and partly in Irish. The object of chronicles like these was to preserve the dates of a certain number of historical facts, considered most useful and interesting by the individuals who compiled them, and who only entered into long details on particular occasions. They begin with a brief chronology of the history of the world, compiled from the Latin writers, such as Orosius, Bede, &c., and among the events noted from these authorities, the Irish compilers have inserted a few of the bardic stories of the fabulous histories of their own country.

The Irish chronicles become much more numerous during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Among these, one of the most valuable is the ANNALS OF ULSTER, compiled in the latter half of the fifteenth century by a learned ecclesiastic of Fermanagh, one of the Maguires. They were subsequently continued to 1541, so that, combined, these annals contain the history of Ireland, and more especially of the northern province, from the beginning of the Christian era to the middle of the sixteenth century. The fifteenth century, a period at which the native Irish chieftains seemed to be regaining their power, was especially the age of Irish historians and of Irish poets, and several valuable chronicles were composed at that period, of which, as few of them are at present accessible, it is unnecessary to give a detailed list. Among them is a history of Thomond, from the landing of Henry II. in Ireland to the year 1318. Another valuable Irish chronicle, relating more especially to Munster, known as the BOOK OF FERMOY, is believed to be still extant. At a much later period, a learned and laborious member of the sept of the Mac Geoghegans of Westmeath, Conla mac Geoghegan, completed in the year 1627 a compilation from the older chroniclers and historical writers, commencing with the fabulous ages, and ending in the year 1466, but which is understood to be chiefly a translation from the ANNALS OF CLONMACNOISE. This work, written in English, exists in several manuscript copies, although it has never been printed.

But the best known and most celebrated of the later compilations of this class is that which goes under the name of the ANNALS OF THE FOUR MASTERS, and which we owe to one of the family of the O'Clerys, the hereditary bards and historians of the O'Donnells of Tirconnell. Michael O'Clery, born about the year 1580, in the county of Donegal, was a Franciscan friar at Louvain, and having, by his knowledge of Irish antiquities, attracted the attention of his fellow-countrymen there, who were anxious to publish the ecclesiastical history of Ireland, he returned to his native country to collect materials for their undertaking. There he formed the design of compiling an Irish chronicle more complete than any of those which preceded it, and he is said to have spent fifteen years in collecting the materials, visiting most parts of Ireland in search of the manuscript works of the earlier historians. He was assisted throughout by two other O'Clerys, and by an O'Duigenan, of the family of the ancient historians of Roscommon. From these four labourers the chronicle received the title by which it is best known, though it has also

been frequently called the *ANNALS OF DONEGAL*, because it was written in the Franciscan monastery of that town. Two of the O'Maolconryrs of the Siol-Murray also lent their assistance in the compilation of this work. It commences with the fabulous ages, and is brought down to the year 1616. From the date of the dedication we learn that it was completed in the year 1636. Michael O'Clery died in the monastery of Donegal in the year 1643. Although these annals are, as they profess to be, a general chronicle of Ireland, the history of the southern division of the island is very imperfect, while Ulster and Connaught occupies chiefly the attention of the compilers, who are especially copious and partial in recording the deeds of the O'Donnells of Tirconnell. It must also be observed that the compilers of this chronicle are not very exact in their dates, from the fact of their having followed the chronology of documents which were not all founded on the same system.

Documents like those just described can only be made accessible and useful to the modern historian when they are printed and translated, and it is to be regretted that as yet but a very small portion of them has undergone this process. A learned Irish historical antiquary, Dr. Charles O'Connor, who held the office of librarian to the duke of Buckingham at Stowe, printed, at that nobleman's expense, four quarto volumes of the Irish historians of the earlier ages, under the title *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores Veteres*. This collection, which at present is a very rare and expensive book, contains the original texts accompanied with a Latin version of the Annals of Tigernach, those of Inisfallen and Boyle, the Annals of the Four Masters from the commencement to the year 1172, and the portions of the Annals of Ulster extending from 431 to 1131. Until within the last two or three years, these were the only portions of the native Irish chronicles that were printed, so that, unless acquainted with the Irish language, and so situated as to be able to consult the manuscripts in the public and private libraries where they are deposited, the modern historian of Ireland had no means of making himself acquainted with the Irish account of events during the long and important period from the first landing of the Anglo-Normans in the latter half of the twelfth century to the reign of James I. At length, in 1845 and 1846, an enterprising publisher of Dublin gave to the public a translation of the whole of the Annals of the Four Masters from the year 1171 to the conclusion of that compilation in 1616. This translation, by Owen Connellan Esq., "Irish Historiographer to their late majesties George IV. and William IV.," is accompanied with numerous useful notes. Two years later, in 1848, the Irish text of this chronicle, with a new English translation, appeared in three volumes, under the title of "*Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616, edited from the autograph Manuscript, with a Translation and copious Notes, by John O'Donovan, Esq., M.R. I. A., Barrister-at-law.*" This edition is rendered valuable to the historian by the collation of the text of the Four Masters with that of several other Irish chronicles, and the insertion in the notes of very numerous variations and additions from them, which give it in a great measure the advantage to be derived from the publication of English translations of those different records. The chief chronicles which Mr. O'Donovan has used for this purpose are, the old English version of the Annals of Clonmacnoise, by Mac Geoghegan, an old English translation of the Annals of Ulster, and a portion of the Annals of Leacan translated in the seventeenth century for sir James Ware.

Still our Irish materials relate chiefly to the northern portion of the island; few of the annals of the southern province during this long period are accessible, and they are all exceedingly scanty in the information they give us relating to the affairs of the English pale. We are inclined, however, to believe, from the general character of the chronicles which have been published, that the loss the history of Ireland sustains from the non-publication of the others is not perhaps so great as might be supposed. They all contain the same kind of information, chronological records of predatory expeditions of one chief against another, battles, murders, and deaths of individuals, with no great variation in the mode of relating them or diversity in the circumstances, and little or no information as to the origin of these petty feuds, their secret motives, or even as to the sentiments and manners of the people; so that if they were all printed and translated, the chief gain would be an addition to our bare list of such events as these, which would not throw much further light on the general history of the country. They are, moreover, compiled with partial feelings, and are so imperfect as historical narratives, that we should know very little of some of the most important revolutions which have passed over the island, did not foreign documents come to our aid. We should literally know nothing of the events of the Anglo-Norman invasion, if we had not the contemporary narratives of Giraldus Cambrensis and the anonymous Anglo-Norman *trouveur*.

The interest created in England by the events which followed the landing of king Dermot's Anglo-Norman allies induced Giraldus Cambrensis to compile his two works on the condition and history of Ireland in the latter part of the twelfth century, the *TOPOGRAPHY OF IRELAND*, and the *HIBERNIA EXPUGNATA*, or history of the Anglo-Norman invasion, of which a detailed account is given in the present volume (pp. 117, 118), and which are certainly the most important records of the history of Ireland in that age. The first, although largely disfigured with the prejudices of the writer, as well as those of the time, is still the only account of Ireland and Irishmen, as they existed at that period, which we possess; and we have nothing therefore with which to attest its accuracy so as to separate always the true from the false, but it probably contains more of truth than some modern writers have been willing to admit. We have every reason to consider Giraldus's history of the Anglo-Norman invasion as a carefully written history, and as perfectly accurate in its general details, and in the sentiments and motives which are attributed to the various personages who acted prominent parts in it; the writer was intimately acquainted with those personages, and received his information from their own lips; it was evidently his wish to give a true history, and the excusable partiality which leads him to eulogize his own relatives is not of that character which detracts in any important degree from the high character of his work. In one or two instances his memory, or some confusion in his notes, seems to have led him into an error in the order of minor events, which we are enabled to detect by another, and a very important document, the *ANGLO-NORMAN POEM ON THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND BY HENRY THE SECOND*, the work of a contemporary *trouveur*, or bard, who had gathered his information partly from Irishmen, and who, by his acquaintance with the interpreter of king Dermot, named Maurice Regan, who had been employed in all the transactions between the Anglo-Normans and their Irish allies, had the advantage of hearing the version of the eventful story as told by the latter, which, it must be avowed, confirms in a remarkable manner the general accuracy of Giraldus Cambrensis. The two works of Giraldus were printed

in the original Latin by the antiquary Camden, in his collection of English chronicles published under the title of *Anglica, Normannica, Cambrica, a veteribus scripta*; an old English translation of the History (*Hibernia Expugnata*), by John Hooker, "of Excester," will be found in the first volume of Holinshed's Chronicles. The Anglo-Norman poem is preserved in a manuscript on vellum of the thirteenth century, now in the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth, but which was once in the possession of sir George Carew, who made a very incorrect analysis of it in English, which was printed in the last century in Harris's *Hibernica*. The poem, however, which is imperfect at the end, and wants a few lines at the beginning, was printed in the original language in 1836; but until the present work was published, it has only been known to the historians of Ireland through Carew's analysis. Had this poem been preserved without mutilation, we should probably have known the name of the writer.

After the age of Giraldus Cambrensis, an English writer from time to time gives us an interesting, if slight, glimpse of the state of the sister island, which helps to fill up the more barren records of the English pale, or the wearisome and partial list of Irish plundering expeditions. Among these accidental records we may merely mention, as the most curious, the short narrative of the expedition of king John (p. 128 of the present volume), the account of the death of the earl of Pembroke, given by Matthew Paris (p. 140), the Anglo-Norman and Irish Songs (pp. 152, 163), the story of the persecutions carried on against the lady Alice Kyteler and her friends (p. 172), Froissart's account of the first visit of king Richard II. to Ireland (p. 206), and the French poem on the second expedition of the same monarch (p. 211).

There also comes to our assistance now another class of historical documents in the shape of a few Anglo-Irish chronicles, which give us some of the historical traditions of the English pale, as they were preserved, apparently, in its principal towns and in some of the great English families. The oldest record of this kind is one which, unfortunately, has not yet been published, and is therefore inaccessible, although the original manuscript is said to exist in Ireland—the ANNALS of John Clynn, a Franciscan friar of Kilkenny, who flourished about the middle of the fourteenth century. A brief Latin chronicle of Ireland, closing with the year 1370, was printed in Camden's *Britannia*. A historical manuscript, known as the BOOK OF HOWTH, and compiled at different times in the latter part of the fifteenth and earlier part of the sixteenth centuries, contains a number of notices, of different degrees of authenticity, relating to the affairs of the English pale during that period. It is understood to have furnished the greater part of the materials for a chronicle compiled at the end of the sixteenth century, known as HANMER'S CHRONICLE. Earlier in this century, another ecclesiastic of Kilkenny, James Grace, prior of St. John's, compiled a chronicle known as GRACE'S ANNALS OF IRELAND; and another similar work appeared subsequently under the same title of ANNALS OF IRELAND, by Thady Dowling chancellor of Leighlin. Two or three other chronicles of Ireland were composed shortly before, or soon after, the year 1600, such as that published in Holinshed, and the compilations of Marleborough, Campion, and Stanihurst, which contain valuable notices taken from documents no longer known, or from the traditions of the English pale.

A variety of circumstances had called the attention of Englishmen to the affairs of Ireland during the reign of queen Elizabeth, which led to a number of publications on

the history of that island, and on the condition of its inhabitants, and by these we are first made tolerably well acquainted with its internal state. The manners of the Irish and the state of the country are now pictured to us by such writers as Spencer and others, who lived among them; and the contemporary history is told in a number of printed tracts, written by the persons who had served in that island either as soldiers, statesmen, or lawyers.

We have yet said nothing of the most important and authentic of all historical documents, the OFFICIAL RECORDS of the English government. From the thirteenth century, these are preserved in Ireland in great abundance, and some small portions of them have already been published under the direction of the Irish Record Commission. These documents, however, are mostly of a class which do little towards explaining the facts they announce or authenticate; and of themselves they offer but a dry outline, often only a list of names, which it requires the more intelligible, though less certain, statements of the chronicler, the narratives of contemporaries, or the still less substantial traditions of subsequent times, to clothe them in an intelligible form. Some of these records are, it is true, more significant than others; and this is especially the case with that very important class of documents which are generally classed under the title of STATE PAPERS. A few letters and reports on the affairs of Ireland before the sixteenth century, written by those who were employed in them, have been preserved, and some of them have been made use of in the following pages. From the reign of Henry VIII. downwards, they become infinitely more numerous, and are found in large quantities in the State Paper Office, in some other public offices, in great public libraries, such as that of Lambeth Palace, and in the private archives of the descendants of many of the statesmen who distinguished themselves in Irish history from the reign of Elizabeth to more modern times. A considerable mass of these valuable materials has been given to the public in the second and third volumes of the *State Papers published under the authority of his Majesty's Commission*, which contain the whole of the papers relating to Ireland during the reign of Henry VIII. preserved in the State Paper Office, in the Chapter House at Westminster, and among the manuscript collections of sir George Carew in Lambeth library. These are freely used in the following pages. It is to be regretted that the slow progress of the publications of the English State Paper Commission has not yet placed within our reach the similar documents of some of the subsequent reigns.

We have thus slightly pointed out the general character of the various records of Irish history, which, emanating from different sources, must be examined, sifted, and compared together, to form a connected view of the condition and revolutions of that country previous to the reign of Elizabeth. The general use of printing has multiplied to an indefinite degree the materials of history subsequent to that period. Almost every one who had a complaint to make, or an opinion to give, now laid it before the public through the agency of the press, and controversial pamphlets, personal narratives, and a long list of other historical and political tracts, followed each other in quick succession. This mighty engine of modern civilization was soon made subservient to the publication of some of the older materials of history, and the greater interest which Ireland daily excited, encouraged men like sir John Davies, sir George Carew, sir James Ware, the learned Ussher, and others, to collect documents and commit them to print. The religious animosities, which now became hot and implacable, led to the publication on a

still more extensive scale, by the zealous Catholics of that age, of another class of Irish records, the *Saints' Lives*, which we have not mentioned before, because they are not only less authentic than many of the others, but because they really add little to our knowledge of historical events. They consist chiefly of traditions and legends which have no local position in our annals; although, compiled chiefly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, they contain some illustrations of the condition of Irish society at that period.

The power of the Irish septs was utterly broken in the wars which followed the great insurrection of 1641, but the misgovernment, or at least the mistaken measures, which had so long weighed upon that country, still remained in a great degree unreformed. The struggle between contending races and parties was, however, removed from the field to the senate, and, with the exception of a few wild and senseless outbreaks, we must now quit the records of the wars of contending chieftains for those of the less sanguinary combats of contending orators and the intrigues of politicians. Political pamphlets became every day more numerous, and these were soon followed by the more systematic and continued strife of newspapers and political journals. It would be useless here to attempt to give a description of the various classes of materials for the history of the last and present centuries.

The interest just mentioned as having been excited by the affairs of Ireland under the Tudors and the Stuarts soon led to various attempts at compiling the history of the island. One of the earliest of these is *THE CHRONICLES OF IRELAND*, published in Holinshed's Chronicle, derived entirely from English sources. About the same time an Irish parish priest, a native of Tipperary, named Geoffrey Keating, who had studied at Salamanca in Spain, was occupied in compiling a history of his own country, chiefly from the native authorities. *KEATING'S HISTORY OF IRELAND* was written in Irish, and exhibits a total want of historical criticism in its author. The original has not been published, but the earlier part of it, which consists of a compendium of the wild fables of the bards relating to the earlier history of their country, has been translated into English more than once, and the translations have gone through several editions since the commencement of the last century. Philip O'Sullivan, a descendant of the O'Sullivans of the county of Cork, who was a sea-captain in the Spanish service under Philip IV., and was therefore strongly prejudiced in his religious and political opinions, published in 1621, a quarto volume entitled *HISTORIÆ CATHOLICÆ HIBERNIÆ COMPENDIUM*, which gives a sketch of the history of Ireland from the earliest times, and especially of the wars in the reign of Elizabeth and James I. from 1588 to 1618. The author, indeed, gave the earlier history as an introduction to that of his own times.

These works were followed by the more able compilations of sir James Ware, and by the still more complete history of Ireland from the English invasion to the reign of Charles II., published in two volumes 4to. in 1689, under the title *HIBERNIA ANGLICANA*, by sir Richard Cox, a native of Bandon in the county of Cork, who held successively the high offices of judge of the Common Pleas and lord chancellor of Ireland. A few years before this, in 1665, a Catholic ecclesiastic of Ireland, John Lynch, a native of Galway, had published a history of Ireland in Latin, intended chiefly as a confutation of Giraldus Cambrensis, and therefore entitled *CAMBRENSIS EVERSUM*, or *Cambremsis Overthrown*; and in 1685 appeared O'FLAHERTY'S *OGYGIÀ*, a very learned work on the earlier history of Ireland, written also in Latin. An English version of this work

appeared in 1793. Roderick O'Flaherty, its author, was a gentleman farmer of the barony of Moycullen in the county of Galway, who died in 1718, at the advanced age of eighty-nine.

In the latter half of the last century appeared two important works on Irish history, the *History of Ireland* from the earliest period to the English invasion, by Sylvester O'Halloran, who has given the fabulous history more fully than Keating himself, and the *History of Ireland* from the invasion under Henry II. to modern times, by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Leland, senior fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and prebendary of St. Patrick's. The latter work is especially valuable from the extent of Leland's researches, and from the great use he made of records then existing in Dublin, and of other manuscripts to which he had access, so that it has become as it were the foundation on which modern histories of Ireland have been built. But the labours of Dr. O'Connor, of sir William Betham, and of other learned and diligent antiquaries in Ireland, as well as the publications of the Record and State Paper Commissions, and of the various societies now established in Ireland for the publication of historical records, have added greatly to the stores of information which Leland had at his command.

It will be seen by this slight outline of the materials of Irish history which now exist, how wide is the field of research on which the historian is necessarily thrown. Till the eighth century at least, the history is traditional and uncertain, and we can have little hesitation in considering the greater portion of it as fabulous. The more authentic records appear to have commenced about the time of the first Danish invasions, and perhaps arose from the wish of the monks to preserve in their different houses memorials of the severe persecutions to which they had been exposed in the desolating wars which followed the appearance of the Northmen on the Irish coasts. The outline of events during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, has a general appearance of truth, although, from our ignorance of the exact manner in which they were originally recorded, it is impossible to try them by minute criticism. The long and often successful struggle which the Irish sustained against the Danes, must be ascribed to their habitual practice in the predatory warfare which characterised these invasions, which were much more fatal in countries more advanced in social civilization. That the Danish invasions had everywhere a demoralizing effect, there can be little doubt; and it is not improbable that in Ireland they assisted in breaking up kingdoms where there was something more like settled government and peace than we find in the numerous petty principalities that divided the island when we become intimately acquainted with its position. But the extraordinary glory and prosperity which characterizes the heroic ages of Irish history, we owe no doubt to the glowing imagination of the bards. The tendency of English supremacy ought to have been, and no doubt was intended to have been, to reduce the anarchy by which Ireland was torn under the chiefs of the native septs beneath one paramount government and law; but this tendency was thwarted by the peculiar character of the times, and its real effect was to throw among the already disorganized population new septs, of a foreign race, with new chiefs, more turbulent even than the natives themselves. It is the unceasing and monotonous struggle of these discordant elements, enlivened but a little from time to time by the affairs of the English pale, that must occupy the historian from the twelfth century to the sixteenth. Society in Ireland had then become so thoroughly disorganized, and the animosities and feuds with which the island was filled,

as well as the hatred towards the government of the English pale, had become so inveterate, that the policy which might have been pursued with advantage to all parties in the middle of the twelfth century, was no longer possible, and it required another long and sanguinary struggle before the power of the English government was sufficiently strong to enforce that order which had been so long unknown in Green Erin. Our materials for the history of this struggle are more numerous and diversified in character, and it is therefore far more intelligible. It required still a century and a half to render the English government paramount in Ireland, and then the country was left a prey to a multitude of grievances which had become so deeply rooted in the course of ages, and which, from the peculiar agency by which that power had been established, were obstinately persisted in, as though they were looked upon as the rights of conquerors. The history of Ireland from the reign of Charles II. to the present time, is that of a continual struggle for the redress of grievances. During a large portion of that period England itself had been the scene of a bitter struggle between political factions; and it must be confessed that the government of Ireland has too often been treated as little better than a plaything in the midst of those factions, and that, till recently, its grievances have seldom received the due attention which its position as an important part of the British empire required.

The circumstances of the political condition of Ireland, its varying relations with the English government, and, above all, its petty animosities, influenced in no small degree the character of the materials of its history, and the spirit in which they were received. The Irish annalists previous to the sixteenth century are much less hostile to the English than panegyrists of the particular septs to which they happened to belong. But the hostility of the natives to a foreign race had naturally enough increased among them the spirit of nationality, even to an exaggerated degree, and, amid the sufferings and exasperations of the present, they listened with more fervour than ever to the recitals of their bards, which told of the glory of Ireland in ancient days, until their poetic fables became a part of every Irishman's belief, and even sober historians found it difficult to escape this influence. At the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, there was an evident desire in England to become acquainted with the real character and condition of the Irish, with a view to ameliorating it, and the English writers of that age speak of the natives of the sister island with far greater indulgence than had been usual in this country; but this feeling soon gave way before the religious fanaticism which characterized the succeeding age, and the dreadful hatred of everything Irish which followed the rising of 1641. Irish history began now to be written more than ever in the party spirit which seemed to have taken possession of everybody's heart. English writers appeared to have for their grand object to throw contempt on the Irish character, and to make a parade of Irish disloyalty, Irish turbulence, and Irish cruelty. The protestants were actuated during this period by an exaggerated horror of everything papistical, while the catholics of France and Spain exerted themselves to embitter the hatred which their less enlightened brethren in Ireland bore to the English heretics, until this island of the far west seemed fated to be the spot in which the two creeds were to weary each other out in mutual destruction. Foreign intrigues now, indeed, exerted no small influence in keeping up the discontent and agitation which reigned in the sister island. The spirit thus raised was more violent and more difficult to appease, even than that left by the long

sanguinary struggle of the middle ages, and it has continued more or less to animate the generality of writers on Irish affairs down to our own days. Too many historical writers have lost sight of historical truth in the intensity of their prejudices, and others seem to have written history with no other object than to strengthen and perpetuate them. Leland's History of Ireland has the rare merit of being in a remarkable measure free from these national prejudices.

At the same time it must be allowed that, with such a mass of discordant materials, not only too often prejudiced in themselves, but which have been intentionally disfigured and misinterpreted by writers who have used them, it is no easy task to write an impartial history of Ireland, or even to examine and compare the various records of the events of past ages, so as to obtain the nearest approximation to truth which can now be expected. Fortunately for us, much has now been done to relieve us from some portion of the latter task, and we have not hesitated to profit by the labours of numerous predecessors, such as Ware, Coxe, Leland, and Moore. We have fortunately been enabled, by the recent publication of Irish chronicles, and numerous other documents totally unknown to them, as well as by the communication of many historical records relating to Ireland from collections not generally accessible, to add considerably to the knowledge of Irish history derived from former historians, and, in many instances, to correct their statements. We have endeavoured, and shall continue to endeavour, to be strictly impartial, to abstain from entering into political or religious discussions, and to relate the events, in the order they present themselves, in the true light which a comparison of the records appears to throw upon them, without any leaning to one side or to the other. In this course we have hitherto proceeded, anxious, if possible, while we write without prejudice ourselves, to avoid shocking the prejudices of others. We have given at some length the primeval history of the Irish kingdoms, as sung by the bards, and the early history of Christianity in Ireland, as handed down to us by the medieval ecclesiastics, because, however great may be the portion of mere tradition and fable which they contain, they have become so deeply enwrapped in all our notions of the history of Ireland, that we could not reject them without incurring the charge of neglecting a not unimportant portion of our work. To criticise or examine such stories would lead to no satisfactory result. For this latter reason, also, we have given the subsequent history prior to the Anglo-Norman invasion, simply as we gather it from the native chronicles. After the establishment of an English government in Ireland, it becomes more necessary to study our materials critically, and use them with caution, and this necessity increases as we proceed.

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND.

BOOK I.

HISTORY OF IRELAND PREVIOUS TO THE CONQUEST BY THE NORMANS.

CHAPTER I.

IRELAND AS KNOWN TO THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.



WHEN we carry our inquiries far back into the history of most modern nations, we arrive eventually at a period when the materials of history become so rare and indistinct, that it is necessary to arrange and classify them with more than ordinary care and minuteness, and even after that classification, they afford only a weak and doubtful light. These materials, however, are naturally separated into three grand divisions, which ought to be kept perfectly distinct from each other. We have, first, the accounts given by contemporary writers of other countries, then in a more advanced state of civilization; these are the most valuable materials, but they are more or less copious according to a variety of circumstances. In the absence of written documents belonging to the people whose history we are treating, we have the numerous and various articles which they made and used—arms, and domestic implements, and personal ornaments, yielded up to us by the earth on which they trod, and found more especially in their graves. The comparison of these articles, which form our second class of materials, is the more special province of the archæologist; although the

most authentic of all, they tell but half their story without written documents, and it is only by a careful collation with the similar monuments of other peoples, in different circumstances, that we obtain, to a certain extent, a view of the domestic manners, the national habits, and the state of civilization, of the particular people to whom they belonged. The third class of materials, which is much less to be depended upon than the others, is far more copious and attractive; it consists of the historical traditions of a much later age, which are at best but the work of poets and minstrels, though they form the earlier part of the written annals of all countries.

It is necessary, for the interest of truth, to consider each of these classes of materials separately. The two first assist each other mutually, because they are contemporary and truth-telling monuments; but the third belongs to the romance of history, and the indiscreet adoption of it has chiefly given its character to what is commonly called the mythic period of the history of nations.

The early allusions to Ireland found in the classic writers of antiquity are extremely vague: with them this island of the far west stood somewhat in the same position, in a geographical point of view, as that held in

modern times by Patagonia or any other extreme point, visited occasionally by the mariner in search of water or traffic, but as yet only partially explored. The earliest geographical notions of the Greeks are found in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, and more especially in that singular cycle of romance which celebrated the expedition of the Argonauts, the oldest account of which is found in a poem published under the name of the fabulous Orpheus, and believed to have been written about five hundred years before Christ. The geographical knowledge possessed by the Greeks at this period was confined within a very limited circle. Italy was its boundary to the west, and they believed that the Euxine opened to the north into the ocean which encircled the whole earth. According to the poem just alluded to, the Argonauts passed from the Pontus Euxinus into the northern ocean, here called the Cronian Sea, and after a variety of adventures, they arrived at islands (for the name is used in the plural as well as in the singular,) named Iernides (*νήσοισιν Ἰερνίδων*), situated on the Atlantic ocean, and which can only apply to the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland. The adventurers are here overtaken by a violent storm, which carries them out into the ocean, and after escaping various perils, they at length reach in safety the pillars of Hercules, and enter the Mediterranean. A hundred and fifty years later, about the middle of the fourth century before Christ, Aristotle, in his treatise de Mundo, speaks almost as vaguely as his predecessors, of the two large islands in the western ocean, called "the British Isles," and consisting of Albion and Ierne (*Ἀλβιον καὶ Ἰέρνη*).

Long before this period the Phœnicians of Syria had become the merchants of the world; they were establishing their colonies along the southern shores of the Mediterranean, and their voyages extended beyond the straits to the south and north far along the coasts of Africa and Europe. They visited the British isles at an early period, allured thither by the valuable metals found in them, and it was no doubt to them that the Greeks owed their slight and vague knowledge of Ierne and Albion.

The next Greek writer who mentions Ierne is the geographer Strabo, who wrote about half a century before the birth of our Saviour. He tells us simply that this isle was situate on the other side of Britain, and that it was ill inhabited on account of the

coldness of the climate. Strabo's great contemporary, Julius Cæsar, the first Roman invader of Britain, tells us that Ireland is one-half less than its sister island, but confesses that he could gather no certain information relating to it. But in the middle of the first century of the Christian era, the Roman writers begin to show a better knowledge of this island, which Cæsar had already spoken of by its Latin name of Hibernia. Mela, still labouring under the prejudices of the Greeks, describes it as nearly equal in size to Britain, but he asserts that the severity of its climate hindered the fruits of the earth from coming to maturity, although its herbage was so luxuriant ("green Erin") that it was necessary to allow the cattle only a short portion of the day for grazing, lest they should over-eat themselves. Strabo had expressed his opinion of the barbarism of the inhabitants of Ierne, by informing us that they eat human flesh, and that the sexes lived in promiscuous intercourse, without paying attention even to the ties of blood. Mela tells us that the Irish of his time were so uncivilized, that they were equally without sense of virtue or of religion; and Solinus, who describes them as an inhospitable and warlike people, and gives several other instances of their barbarism, assures us that they made no distinction between right and wrong. Their cannibalism seems to have been almost proverbial; it is alluded to by Diodorus Siculus; and St. Jerome, at a much later period, declares that in his youth he had seen Scots or Irishmen exhibited in Gaul, eating human flesh.

But with the establishment of the Roman power in Britain, Ireland soon began to be better known to the Romans, not only through the communications which must always have existed between the two islands, but through the more general resort of merchants to its numerous ports. Tacitus describes it as being a smaller island than Britain, but as resembling it in climate and the character and manners of its inhabitants, though he speaks of the comparison as unfavourable to the Irish. Its approaches and harbours, he says, were better known through the merchants who frequented them, than those of Britain. From this author we learn that the Irish were already weakened by those domestic feuds which have ever since proved their bane. One of the native chieftains, driven away in consequence of these feuds, had, in the year 82, taken shelter with Agricola, the Roman governor of Britain,

who, at his suggestion, made preparations for the invasion of Ireland, in order to reduce it under the Roman yoke, which he was assured he might easily effect with a single legion and a few auxiliaries. Agricola had already made his preparations, and collected his army of invasion on the nearest coast of Britain, when he appears to have been called off from his design by affairs of still greater importance. The poverty of our information relating to the history of our island under the Romans, leaves it doubtful whether the Roman armies subsequently passed into Ireland or not; but Juvenal, in a remarkable passage of his second satire, speaks of his countrymen as having carried their arms beyond the Irish shores.*

In the geographical tables of Ptolemy, published soon after the date of the two last-mentioned writers, about A.D. 120, Ireland is laid before our eyes in a more distinct form, and we are made acquainted with the principal points of the coasts, as well as the principal ports to which the merchants traded, the chief towns of the island, and the different tribes whose territories bordered on the sea. Ptolemy used chiefly the later Greek authorities, and he is believed to have derived his information relating to the western extremities of the world as then known, directly or indirectly, from the merchants who frequented them; his account is the more worthy of our attention, as it forms the first authentic starting-point for the history of Ireland.†

This geographer, whose representation of the form of the island is much less incorrect than might be expected, begins his survey with the northern side, at what he calls the Northern Promontory or Cape, answering to a headland on the coast of Donegal, still known popularly as the North Cape. He proceeds thence to the east, to what he calls Cape Venicium, which perhaps answers to the modern Malin Head; he then names in succession the mouths of two rivers, which he calls Vidua and Argita, supposed to be the Foyle and the Bann; and he ends his description of this coast with Cape Robogdium, believed to be Fair-Head, in the vicinity of the Giant's Causeway. Two distinct tribes

are mentioned by Ptolemy as occupying the country bordering on this line of coast, and giving their name to the extreme promontories, the Venicii and the Robogdii; the former inhabited the county of Donegal, the latter those of Londonderry and Antrim. Ptolemy knew of no town on this coast.

Proceeding along the western coast, from the northern cape, Ptolemy mentions first, the mouth of the river Ravius, supposed to be the modern Guibarra. A considerable town (*πόλις ἐπίσημος*), at which he next arrives, and which he calls Magnata, appears to answer to the site of Donegal. Then follow in succession five rivers, the Libnii (or, according to one editor, Libeiis), answering probably to Sligo Bay; the Ausoba, perhaps the bay of Killala; the Senus, perhaps Clew or Newport Bay; the Dur, which seems to answer to the bay of Galway; and the Iernus, which there can be little doubt is the Shannon. Beyond these was the Southern Promontory, which is supposed to correspond with Dunnore Head. The tribes enumerated by Ptolemy as inhabiting this line of coast are the Erdini or Erpeditani, whose territory adjoined to that of the Venicii; the Magnatæ, who occupied the neighbourhood of Donegal, the site of their chief town, which took its ancient name from them; the Auteri, who held the district extending from the county of Donegal to that of Sligo; the Gangani, who inhabited the county of Mayo; and the Velibori, or Ellebri, who held the district lying between Galway and the Shannon. The south-west part of the island, and a considerable part of the interior, was inhabited by the Iverni, who gave name not only to the great river, but to the whole island, and who may perhaps be considered as the aboriginal inhabitants.

Ptolemy gives no points on the south-western part of the island, the coast of the Iverni; but he gives the bearings of two rivers on the south, the Dabrona, which seems to answer to Cork Harbour, (or to the Blackwater,) and the Birgus, the name and position of which coincide remarkably with those of the Barrow; and then he takes us to Carnsore Point, which was then called the Holy Promontory (*ἱερὸν ἄκρον*). Two tribes inhabited the neighbourhood of the rivers noted by Ptolemy on this side of the island, the Usdiæ or Vodiæ (according to the variations of the manuscripts), in the modern counties of Waterford and Tipperary, and the Brigantes, in Wexford.

* The words of the satirist are,—

Arma quidem ultra

Litora Juvernæ promovimus, et modo captas

Orcadas, ac minima contentos nocte Britannos.—

Juvenal, Sat. II. v. 159.

† The best commentary on Ptolemy's Geography of Ireland, is that by Konrad Mannert, *Geographie der Griechen und Römer; Britannia*, pp. 216, 229.

The eastern part of the island, separated from Britain by what Ptolemy calls the Ivernian ocean, contained more towns than either of the other three. The first place marked in proceeding north from the Holy Promontory, is the mouth of the river Modonus, supposed to be the Liffey; close to it was the town of Manapia, which is believed to be Dublin; then we are brought to the river Oboca, which is supposed to be the Boyne; and then to another town called Eblana, which, from Ptolemy's calculations, is supposed by Mannert to have stood at or near Dundalk, and not to have been (as we should have guessed from the name) Dublin.* The mouth of another river, the Bubinda or Buvinda, appears to correspond with Carlingford Bay; a cape called Isamnium answers to the modern Point St. John, forming the north-western extremity of Dundrum Bay; and between this and Cape Robogdium are marked two other rivers, the Vinderius, probably the small river which runs into Strangford Lough, and the Logia, the mouth of which seems to correspond with the bay of Carrickfergus. The tribes known to Ptolemy as inhabiting this coast, were (proceeding from the north) the Darini, immediately following the Robogdii, and occupying part of Antrim; the Voluntii, or, according to other texts, the Usluntii, occupying the county of Down; the Blanii or Eblani, who occupied the territory round the bay of Dundalk, and appear to have given name to their town, Eblana; the Cauçi, on the banks of the Boyne; the Manapii, occupying the county of Dublin; and the Coriondi in Wicklow, between the Manapii and the Brigantes. The two names of tribes last mentioned prove that the south-east of Ireland had received its population from Britain.

Ptolemy has further given us the names and positions of seven towns in the interior of the island. The first of these he names Regia, which is probably a Latin name given to it as being the seat of one of the principal chiefs or reguli of Ireland; it was situated in the north, probably in the neighbourhood of Omagh. Rhæba seems to have stood in the vicinity of Inniskillen, on the banks of Lough Erne. Laberus was probably in the

county of Louth, not far from Ardee. Macolicum stood in the centre of the island, between Dublin and Galway, not far from Kilbeggan in Westmeath. Another Regia stood a little way inland from Killala Bay, but its exact position is uncertain. Dunum, the name of which is Celtic, and which was evidently a town of the Manapii, is believed to have stood some miles to the west of Dublin. Ivernīs, or Iernīs, the city of the great tribe of the Iverni, was probably not far from the modern Banagher, on the Shannon. From another part of Ptolemy's work, it would appear that Ivernīs and Rhæba were the two most important towns in Ireland. The Latin name Regia occurring twice, proves that Ptolemy's information was not, as some writers have supposed, taken merely from older Phœnician authorities.

At what time the migration of the Manapii and Brigantes to Ireland took place---whether it preceded or followed the Roman invasion of Britain---we have now no means of deciding. There can be little doubt that the population of Ireland was at this time a mixture of races, and that new tribes were already overpowering the older lords of the soil. At some period, which is equally uncertain with the other early dates, but which appears to belong to the age of Roman rule in Britain, a race from the north, (probably Scandinavian,) the Scots, settled in the northern parts of Ireland, and soon made themselves so powerful, that Scots and Scotland were used for Irishman and Ireland. From the fourth century till the ninth or tenth, the Irish are almost always spoken of as Scots, and this use of the latter word has not unfrequently led more recent writers into serious mistakes. It is the generally received tradition, and we have no better authority to advance, that a colony of Irish Scots, about the beginning of the third century, established themselves in Caledonia, and formed a close alliance with the Picts, who appear to have been a kindred race, in their hostility against the Romanized Britons. In course of time, the name of Scots, lost in Ireland, was transferred to the whole population of North Britain.

Other northern people, among whom were the purer Teutonic race of the Saxons, who afterwards occupied so large a portion of Britain, joined in the attack to which the Roman province was exposed in the middle of the fourth century, until they were repressed by the energy of Theodosius, in the year 368. We are told by the Roman writer

* Eblana and the Oboca are believed by some antiquaries to be Dublin and the modern Avoca, but in this case it will be necessary to suppose that Ptolemy has made a confusion in his latitudes and longitudes, which is not easily explained. I have chiefly followed Mannert.

Ammianus Marcellinus, that the barbarians had overrun the whole of South Britain, and that Theodosius first encountered them under the walls of London. The Roman general, not content with expelling them from his province, followed them into their own fastnesses; and on this occasion at least, the Roman fleet, in pursuit of the fugitives, seems to have paid a hostile visit to the coast of Ireland.* Unfortunately, no detailed account of these events has been preserved. The history of Roman Britain becomes now more indistinct and confused, and we can only trace in the dim light thrown over it by meagre or very doubtful authorities, that the Irish Scots joined in the tumults and ravages which were at last put an end to by the final supremacy of the Anglo-Saxons.

Such is all we learn concerning Ireland from the Greek and Roman writers, previous to the fifth century; and it continued so little known to the rest of Europe, that Isidore of Seville, who wrote about the year 580, still takes his information from the older Roman geographers; he tells us that Ireland is smaller than Britain, but from its position, more fertile; that it was called Ibernica, because its southern shores looked to Spanish Iberia, and were washed by the waves of the Cantabrian ocean; and that it was also named Scotia, from the Scots, by whom it was then inhabited; and he adds, that the island contained no snakes or bees, and few birds, and that even dust or small stones brought thence and scattered among their cells drove the bees away from their honey.† This statement had been made long before by Solinus, and it was repeated with many additions and embellishments in later ages.

The monuments of the earlier inhabitants that remain, confirm in general the statement of the Roman historians, that they resembled the Britons in habits and manners. Their mode of burial seems to have been precisely the same, and this, combined with other circumstances, leads us to sup-

* Claudian, who wrote a poetical panegyric on this war, says of the Roman commander, in one passage:—

Nec falso nomine Pictos

Edomuit, Scotumque vago mucrone secutus,
Fregit Hyperboreas remis audacibus undas.

And in another passage the same poet describes thus the result of the war:—

Maduerunt Saxone fuso

Arcades, incauit Pictorum sanguine Thule,
Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne.

† Isidor. Hisp. Orig. lib. ix., c. 12.

pose that the religious rites of the people of the two islands bore a very close resemblance. In Ireland as in Britain, the graves ---the only constructions of the aboriginal inhabitants which have remained entire--- consisted of a rough chamber or chambers of unhewn stones, covered with a lofty mound of earth or stones, the base of which was often surrounded with a circle of larger stones. In the central chamber or cist, the body was laid in full dress, accompanied with personal ornaments, weapons, or other articles, or if cremation had preceded the burial, the bones were placed in an urn, and similar articles were strewed on the floor. These monuments are of frequent occurrence in Ireland as well as in England, and they are often of enormous magnitude, as in the case of that at Newgrange, near Drogheda, in the county of Meath, and of two others in its immediate neighbourhood. It is far from improbable that Stonehenge, in England, was designed for an enormous sepulchral monument. In the numerous instances where the mound has, in the course of ages, been cleared away, and nothing but the central chamber and the external circle of stones is left standing, the former has received the name of a cromlech, and the latter that of a Druidical circle; and antiquaries who trusted more to their imagination than to a careful comparison of facts, thought they had been temples and altars.

In one respect, the contents of the sepulchres of the ancient Irish seem to contradict the Roman authorities, inasmuch as they apparently testify a higher degree of cultivation than in Britain. In most cases, the Irish urns are better made and much more richly ornamented than the British urns. The personal ornaments are more numerous and of greater intrinsic value, and articles of gold are far more abundant. Their forms and ornamentation are, however, similar in character; and we have other proofs that gold was found in Ireland in great abundance at a remote period. The immense quantity of gold found in the sepulchral mounds of the ancient Scythians, on the steppes of Russia, is no proof of the civilization of the people who were buried in them.

These various monuments of the arts among the early inhabitants of Ireland, are not found only in their graves, for they are dug up plentifully wherever land previously untouched is brought into cultivation, and they are obtained in great abundance from

the beds of rivers, and from those peculiar characteristics of Ireland, the bogs. The gold ornaments consist chiefly of the torques, or collars for the neck, which appear to have been peculiar to the Celtic tribes, with fibulæ, bracelets, rings for the fingers, crescents, bullæ, ornamented plates of gold of different forms, &c. Swords, spear-heads, knives, axes, tools of different kinds, with basins and other vessels, are generally of bronze. Many weapons and tools, especially those formed like axes and hammers, to which the old antiquaries gave the name of celts, are found rudely made of hard stone. Among the most curious, and by far the most numerous, of the articles of gold, are those in the form of rings, or rather of half rings, which the Irish antiquaries have decided to be ring-money, and which, indeed, there seems reason for believing served the purpose of money, for the Irish appear to have had no coinage till a very late period. This ring-money is of different sizes, which we are assured are regulated by an exact proportion of weight. That rings of this kind were used instead of money as a circulating medium among the earlier tribes of western and northern Europe, we know from several sources;* and we even find traces of it among the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, in which kings, renowned for their liberality, are described as "distributers of rings," and their treasurers are the "keepers of the hoards of rings." The bulk of the Irish ring-money is of pure gold, though rare instances occur of rings of silver and copper. The bronze swords, which are leaf-shaped, and resemble those figured on many Greek and Roman monuments, and the spear-heads, are precisely identical with those found not unfrequently in England; the Irish antiquaries suppose them to be Phœnician, but it is quite as probable that they are of Roman or Romano-British manufacture.

Very little has yet been done towards arranging and classifying the antiquities of Ireland, and deducing from them results calculated to throw a light upon its history. Till within a few years they were so utterly neglected, that the gold ornaments generally found their way direct to the melting-pots, and those of bronze or stone, when found, were either thrown away, or

* Ring-money, closely resembling in form that of the ancient Irish, is actually made at the present day in Birmingham, for exportation to Africa, where it circulates among the natives.

kept by the superstitious peasantry as amulets. Several very valuable museums have now been formed, the finest of which is that of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. During the last few years, Irish antiquities have been collected with avidity; but even now the most important circumstances connected with them are too often neglected, and it is considered sufficient to know that they were found in Ireland, without making a memorial of the exact spot and circumstances of their discovery. This neglect has deprived the articles themselves of a great portion of their value to the historian. It is necessary not only to classify these antiquities as Irish, but, as it is certain that Ireland was inhabited by different races, we require to have them classified according to the different districts in which they are found, and then, by minute comparison, we should probably be able to distinguish the characteristics of the different tribes at which the writers of antiquity hint, and to trace those peculiarities to the cognate tribes in other parts. As far as can be ascertained at present, the stone implements and articles resembling those found in Scandinavia and Germany are chiefly met with in the north of Ireland, throughout the province of Ulster, which we have every reason to suppose was peopled by a northern race. The richer articles of gold, the ring-money, and the more ornamental relics, are found chiefly in the south and south-west, and belonged probably to the Iverni and their cognate tribes. The gold itself was chiefly procured from the mountains of Wicklow. The antiquities found in the western districts, bordering on the Irish Channel, are of a more miscellaneous character, partaking of the character of those of the north and south. It was there, probably, that the intermixture of tribes began first, and was most extensive.*

The vagueness of everything connected with early Irish antiquities, and the impenetrable mystery in which the subject seems to be involved, has given room for the genius of archæologists to build up a host of theories into which it is by no means the object of the present work to enter. We know

* This general notion of the light thrown on the ethnography of ancient Ireland by the distribution of its antiquities, is founded chiefly on the information given me by Mr. Crofton Croker, who has formed a remarkably interesting private museum of Irish antiquities, and who has studied them with more care than any other antiquary with whom I am acquainted.

nothing, in fact, of the religion or polity of the ancient Irish, and can only suppose, from analogy, that they were the same, or nearly the same, as those of the Celtic tribes of western Europe, as we find them more or less imperfectly described by the writers of Greece and Rome. In the superstitions of the earlier ages of the world, the western extremities of the earth were looked upon with mystic reverence as possessing an especial degree of holiness, and as being the habitation of some of the sacred personages of the popular creed. To this feeling we owe the legends of the Hesperides, of the Atlantic Island of Plato, and a number of others of a similar description. This mysterious character of sanctity was of course carried further off, as geographical knowledge advanced, until at length Ireland, as the last distinctly known point, was regarded as the "sacred island," and then that character was moved still farther to some indefinite point which had no existence but in the popular imagination. This singular tendency of the popular belief continued to exist down to a late period, and we even find it influencing the minds of the contem-

poraries of Columbus, when he planned the discovery of the New World. Ireland is mentioned as "the sacred island" in the writers of antiquity, and its south-eastern foreland retained the name of the Sacred Promontory, as we have already seen from Ptolemy's geographical description, long after the Christian era. Whether there was any other reason for such an appellation than the common religious belief of nearly the whole pagan world, we cannot now determine; but there are certainly circumstances which might excite a suspicion that, in the migrations of tribes towards the west, Ireland may at last have become the principal seat of Celtic paganism. But this and other questions must be left for discussion to the antiquary, while we hasten forward to a period of more authentic history; previous to which, however, it is but right that we should glance rapidly over that long period of fabulous annals which occupies so large a place in the native Irish Chronicles, and which has exercised an influence so profound on the poetry and popular legends of the Irish people.

CHAPTER II.

LEGENDARY ACCOUNTS OF THE FIRST PEOPLING OF IRELAND.



FTER Christianity had been firmly established among the different nations of western and northern Europe, and they had become acquainted with the history and mythology of Greece and Rome, as well as with the scriptural annals of the first migrations of mankind, they soon began to combine these with their own fables, in the desire to trace their particular descent from the common stock. It is to this tendency that we owe the British legend of the wanderings of Brute, and the Franks and Germans and Northerners created for themselves similar stories. The Irish, more imaginative than the others, were not content with one simple line of descent, but they laid claim to a number of different branches springing

from the same parent stock, at different periods, and forming so many different and distinct colonies; and mounting higher into antiquity, they place the first of these colonies some weeks before the Deluge, when a niece of Noah, whom the legend calls Cesara, is said to have led a colony to the Irish shores. Others say that three daughters of Cain had been there before her, with their husbands and a colony of beautiful ladies. All these, however, were swept away by the flood, which left the island as lonely and desolate as it had been before their arrival.*

* It would be only throwing away time to examine critically fables like those contained in the present and following chapter, and which are here chiefly taken from Keating. They are important merely as they form the foundation of so much of Irish legend and poetry. The period at which they were invented extended probably from the tenth to the twelfth century. One of the great authorities for these legends is the celebrated Psalter of Cashel.

In this wild state it remained, according to the legend, three centuries, and then there came a colony from Migdonia in Greece, led by a chief named Partholan, of the family of Japhet, the ninth in descent from Noah. Partholan had been obliged to leave Greece on account of crimes into which his ambition had led him; he sailed by Sicily, and along the coast of Spain, and landing on a Wednesday, the fourteenth day of May, at Inber-Sceine on the coast of Kerry, he fixed his residence on an island in the river Erne, in the province of Ulster. The legend gives the names of some of Partholan's principal followers, among whom were four "learned men," three Druids, the same number of generals, and two merchants. One of his followers, named Breagha, introduced the custom of duelling; another, whose name was Beoir, "first promoted hospitality and good entertainment, and introduced the custom of feasting into the island;" and on the occasion of his first feast, a third, named Samaliliath, invented the use of cups for the convenience of drinking! Partholan, we are told, brought with him to Ireland his wife Dealnait, three sons with their three wives, and a thousand soldiers. The lady Dealnait, not long after their arrival, proved faithless to her husband, who discovered an amour between her and a low servant of his household named Togha. Partholan expostulated with his wife on her conduct; but she replied boldly and insolently, and the anger of the chief was roused beyond its usual limits. But it was not on the guilty lady or her paramour that he vented it; a favourite greyhound of Dealnait, called Samer, was standing by, and he seized it in his hand and dashed it to pieces against the ground. After this deed of blood, the dog was buried on the same spot in the island which Partholan had from the first chosen as his favourite residence, and which in memory of this event was ever afterwards known by the name of Inis-Samer. This, the Irish annalists tell us, was the "first case of jealousy in Ireland." The "first man who died in Ireland," was Feadha, the son of Tartan, seventeen years after the colony landed, and he was buried in a place called, from this circumstance, Magh-Feadha. Seven lakes burst forth in Ireland on the arrival of Partholan and his colony. He lived thirty years in Ireland, and after his death the island was divided between his four sons. His race lasted three hundred years, at the end of which period the whole population

was swept away by a fearful pestilence, the ravages of which were most severely felt at the Hill of Howth, or, as it was then called, Ben-Heder, the northern promontory of the bay of Dublin.

Ireland was thus again left wild and uninhabited, and it remained so till about the time of the patriarch Jacob, when another scion of the family of Japhet, named Nemeditus, the eleventh in descent from Noah, who, like Partholan, spoke the then universal language, Irish, left the shores of the Euxine sea with his four sons, and brought a new colony to people green Erin. The Nemeditians were engaged during more than one generation in harassing wars, with a powerful tribe of African sea-rovers, named Fomorians, who had established themselves in a strong-hold called the Tower of Conan, in an island on the coast of Ulster, named from it Tor-Inis, or the island of the Tower. At length the oppressed Nemeditians rose against their enemies, took the tower by storm, and levelled it with the ground. But new hosts of Fomorians came to the assistance of their fellows, and the unfortunate Nemeditians were reduced to a state little better than slavery. On one occasion, we are told, the whole forces of the two hostile peoples engaged in battle on the sea shore at low water, and after a savage combat, in which victory inclined to neither side and the slaughter was nearly equal, the tide gained upon them and surrounded them unperceived, and the few who escaped the sword and the spear, perished in the waves, with the exception of one individual who reached a boat in safety. A large party of the Nemeditians fled from their victorious foes, and escaped in ships to Greece, where, instead of meeting with a hospitable welcome, they were reduced to a worse slavery than that which they had left behind them.

The wars between the Nemeditians and the African pirates, and especially the storming of the Tower of Conan, were favourite subjects with the old Irish poets. It is not impossible that they may be founded on vague traditions of the early intercourse between the Phœnician traders and the inhabitants of Ierne.

When the Nemeditians of Ireland had long groaned under the tyranny of their conquerors, at length, after a period of two hundred and seventeen years from the first landing of Nemeditus, a party of the descendants of those of his race who had sought refuge in Greece, took again to the sea, and

came to the relief of their brethren. This third colony is called by the Irish chroniclers the Fir-Bolgs. Their leader, who was named Dela, divided the island among his five sons, who thus founded five kingdoms, and placed a stone in the centre of the island at the point where their five kingdoms met. These were the first "kings" who reigned in Ireland.

Scarcely forty years had elapsed from the establishment of these kingdoms, when another colony of the Nemedians of Greece, named by the chroniclers the Tuatha-de-Danaan, arrived on the Irish shores and deprived their predecessors of the sovereignty. The leader of this people was called Nuadh of the Silver-hand, from an artificial hand of silver substituted for one which he lost in battle subsequently to his arrival in Ireland. These Danaans, during their residence in Greece, had become extraordinary proficient in necromancy, and they carried their mysterious art to Norway and Denmark, where they first settled, and where they established several celebrated schools of magic. From Scandinavia they eventually sailed to Scotland, where they remained a few years, and then proceeded to Ireland. As they approached the shores of that island, they enveloped themselves in a mist by means of their incantations, under cover of which they landed secretly, and penetrated into the interior of the country as far as Sliabh-an-Iaruinn, or the Mountain of Iron, between the lakes of Allan and Erne, before the natives were aware of their presence. The latter made a speedy retreat into Connaught, closely followed by the invaders, who soon overtook them at Moytura, on the borders of Lake Masg. A decisive and sanguinary battle fought at this place, which was often celebrated by the minstrels of after ages under the title of the Battle of the Field of the Tower, ended in the complete discomfiture of the Fir-Bolgs, and rendered the Tuatha-de-Danaan sole masters of Ireland. The Fir-Bolgs fled to the Isle of Man, Arran, and the Hebrides.

The Tuatha-de-Danaan brought with them from Scandinavia, among other extraordinary things, three marvellous treasures, the Lia-Fail or Stone of Destiny, the Sorcerer's Spear, and the Magic Caldron, all celebrated in the old Irish romances. The Lia-Fail possessed the remarkable property of making a strange noise and becoming wonderfully disturbed, whenever a monarch of Ireland of pure blood was crowned, and a prophecy

was attached to it that whatever country possessed it should be ruled over by a king of Irish descent, and enjoy uninterrupted success and prosperity.* It was preserved at Cashel, where the kings of Munster were crowned upon it. According to some writers it was afterwards kept at the Hill of Tara, where it remained until it was carried to Scotland by an Irish prince, who succeeded to the crown of that country. There it was preserved at Scone, until Edward I. carried it away into England, and placed it under the seat of the coronation chair of our kings, where it still remains.

Nine kings of the Tuatha-de-Danaan are said to have ruled in succession, during a period of nearly two hundred years, and then they were overcome by the last and most famous of these fabulous colonies, that of the Milesians or Scots, the history of which forms one of the wildest and most romantic stories of the early Irish annals. It was from this race that the Irish kings and chieftains of modern times claimed descent.

The outline of the story of the Milesians is as follows: after the flood, we are told, the population of the world, assembled to raise the Tower of Babel, was separated into seventy-two peoples, speaking so many different languages. Of these, the Scythians, descended from Gomer, settled in the North. Gomer's grandson, Feniusa Farsa, or Phenius, king of the Scythians, was a prince who applied himself to the study of letters, and he was anxious to make himself acquainted with all the seventy-two languages. With this object he sent out seventy-two learned men to reside seven years among the seventy-two different people who spoke them; and on their return, he left his kingdom, having placed his son Nenuall on the throne as regent during his absence, and proceeded with these learned men to the plain of Shenaar, the scene of the dispersal, where this learned monarch founded a school or college of languages. To this Phenius the Irish annalists ascribe the invention of the Ogham characters, or ancient Irish alphabet, and they tell us that in his college on the plain of Shenaar was

* The properties of this celebrated stone were thus described in two Leonine verses,—

Ni fallat fatum, Scoti quocunque locatum

Invenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem.

It seems to be the opinion of some modern antiquaries that a pillar stone still remaining at the Hill of Tara is the true Lia-Fail, which in that case was not carried to Scotland.

cultivated the purest dialect of the Irish language, called the *Bearla Feini*.

While Phenius presided over his schools at Shenaar, his second son Niul was born, who was, as he grew up, instructed in all the languages of the world, and then Phenius returned to his kingdom and established schools there, over which he placed as president Gadel the son of Eathur. Phenius commanded this scholar to digest the Irish language into form and regulation, and to divide it into five several dialects: the first was the Finian dialect, spoken by the militia and soldiery; the second, the poetical; the third, the historical; the fourth, the dialect of the physicians; and the fifth, the common idiom, or vulgar Irish used in general by the people, which, after the name of Gadel the president, was named "*gaoidhealg*."

On the death of Phenius, his elder son succeeded to the throne, and Niul was left with no other riches than his learning, the fame of which however had reached the ears of the king of Egypt, who induced him to go thither to instruct the Egyptians, and who was so well satisfied with him that he gave him his daughter Scota to wife. Their son was called Gadel, or Gadelas, in memory of his father's friend, the president of the Scythian schools. After one or two generations, the descendants of Niul, having provoked the jealousy of the Egyptian monarch, were expelled, and took refuge in Crete, from whence, after a while, they again put to sea (for they had become great mariners) and returned to their ancient home in Scythia. They were however received by their kindred in a hostile manner, and after struggling seven years they took to their ships again, resolved to seek a home in some other land. After wandering about, in peril from storms and from hostile tribes, and uncertain whither ultimately to bend their course, they consulted their principal Druid, named Caicar, and he by his prophetic knowledge informed them, that there was no country ordained for them to inhabit, until they arrived on the coast of a certain island in the extreme west, but that they themselves would never set foot in that country, although it would be enjoyed by their posterity.

The Gadelians, as this people were now called from Gadelas the son of Niul, proceeded to a country which the Irish annals name Gothland, or the country of the Goths, where they settled temporarily, and remained, according to some versions of the

legend, a hundred and fifty, according to others, three hundred years. They then proceeded to Spain, where, after long and sanguinary wars with the aboriginal inhabitants, the Gadelians attained to great power and influence. One of the most distinguished princes in the direct line from Niul was Breogan, who defeated the Spaniards in many battles, and built a city named after him Brigantia, and afterwards known by the name of Braganza. His grandson, named Milesius, collected his kinsmen and people and returned to Scythia, where by his great merits he became prime minister of the king. His popularity in the sequel excited the king's jealousy, and he only escaped death by invading the palace with his faithful Gadelians, and slaughtering the king, and then, disgusted with the ingratitude of the Scythians, they retired to their fleet, and proceeded direct to the shores of Egypt, where Milesius soon gained so far on the affections of the Pharaoh, that he gave him his daughter in marriage, who, like the wife of Niul, bore the name of Scota. After remaining seven years in Egypt, Milesius on a sudden called to mind the old prophecy of the Druid Caicar, and he again put to sea with his people, made direct for the West, entered the Atlantic Ocean, and after wandering we hardly understand where, landed at length in northern Spain, on the coast of the Bay of Biscay.

Spain, we are told, was at this time infested by the Goths, whom Milesius and his followers defeated in many battles, and thus became masters of nearly all the peninsula. At length a famine in the land, and the harassing life they led, continually exposed to the attacks of enemies, led them to think of seeking their fortunes elsewhere, and the principal persons of the family of Milesius met in council, and they chose Ith the son of Breogan, a prince of great valour and discretion, to lead an expedition in search of the western island promised them in the ancient prophecy. Some say that Ith, before he started, went up to his observatory at the top of the highest tower of Brigantia, and thence, one starry winter's night before he set sail, obtained his first glimpse of Ireland through a powerful telescope! Ith and his party landed on the northern coast of the island, and were rather astonished to find that the natives—who were the Tuathade-Danaan—talked Irish like themselves. They learnt from them that three kings then governed the island, that they were at that

moment met together at a place called Oileach Neid on the confines of the province of Ulster, and that they were engaged in a quarrel about a number of jewels that were left them by their ancestors, which would in all probability be decided only by the sword. Ith marched with a hundred of his men to the spot, where he was well received by the three kings, who referred their dispute to his decision, and he succeeded in restoring confidence between them. But the three princes were no sooner reconciled than they became jealous of the strangers, and fearing that, allured by the richness of the country, they would be tempted to return with a force sufficient to conquer it, they determined to cut them off in their retreat. The result was a desperate battle, in which the Milesians were overpowered by numbers, and Ith was mortally wounded, but they succeeded in carrying their chief on ship-board, though he expired before they reached the coast of Spain. Milesius had died during their absence, but the princes of his family, enraged at the sight of the body of the slaughtered chieftain, determined to go to Ireland and revenge his death.

The Milesians accordingly sailed with thirty ships, and made their first attempt to land at Inber-Slainge on the northern coast of Leinster, now Wexford Harbour. Here they were defeated by the incantations of the Tuatha-de-Danaan, who by their diabolical arts threw a cloud over the whole island, which so confused the invaders, that they thought they saw nothing but the resemblance of a hog. They then left this spot to seek a more favourable coast, and proceeded to the coast of Munster, where they effected a landing at Inber-Sceine, now Bantry-Bay. The Irish chronologists have ascertained that this event happened on Thursday, the first day of May, in the year of the world 2934. Marching into the country, they encountered successively the three wives of the Irish chieftains, with troops of beautiful ladies and Druids, and at length they arrived at the royal palace of Teamair, where it was arranged that the Milesians should first return to their ships, on the agreement that if they could force a landing in despite of the older inhabitants, the latter should, without further opposition, surrender to them the sovereignty of the island. The Tuatha-de-Danaan indeed depended more for protection on their enchantments than on their valour, and no sooner were the Milesians on board than

they conjured up a tempest that nearly destroyed the whole fleet. After much loss and damage, the remains of the naval armament was again assembled, and made good a landing in the old harbour of Inber-Sceine. They marched thence to the mountain of Sliabh-Mis, where was fought the great and decisive battle, so often celebrated by the bards of later times, which secured to the Milesians the conquest of Ireland. Among the slain were several of the Milesian as well as of the native princesses, with many of their beautiful ladies, who seem to have taken a very unfeminine part in these actions; the spot where each fell was in later times pointed out by the memorial stones, grey with age, which were said to stand over them. Another action followed, in which the Milesians were again victorious, and the three princes of the island were slain. The conquerors now seized upon the country, which was divided between the two leaders of the expedition, Heber and Heremon, the latter taking the northern portion of the island, and the other the south. The only dispute between the two princes in the division of their people, is said to have arisen from a very skilful musician named O-Naoi, and an eminent poet named Cir-Mac-Cis, who had accompanied the expedition from Spain, and whom each of the chieftains desired to possess in his kingdom. At length it was determined to decide the question by lots, and in the end the musician fell to the share of Heber, and the poet to Heremon. The old Irish antiquaries tell us that, from this circumstance, the southern part of the island, over which Heber ruled, has ever since been more celebrated for its musicians than the north.

For a year there was peace between the two brothers, and then strife was stirred up by the jealousy of a woman. The three most fruitful valleys in Ireland were Druim Clasach, Druim Beathach, and Druim Finghin. Two of these belonged to Heber. His wife was a princess of great pride and ambition, and she envied the queen of Heremon the possession of the other fruitful valley. After repeatedly urging her husband to lay claim to it, and obtain it by force of arms, she at length declared positively that she would never sleep in his bed again until he had made her queen of the three fruitful valleys of Ireland. Heber, thus instigated, took up arms against his brother, and was defeated and slain in a great battle in the plain of Geisiol, in Leinster. In conse-

quence of this event, Heremon became sole monarch of Ireland.

Heremon was followed, after his death, by a long succession of princes, whose histories are as fabulous as his own, and who are not deserving of a detailed notice. In the reign of Tighernas, the sixth in succession from him, we are told that the first gold-mine was discovered near Liffey; and we learn from Keating that "in his time likewise the colours of blue and green were invented, and the people began to be more polite in their habits, and set off their dress with various ornaments." This prince, it is added, established a law throughout his dominions, that the quality of every person should be known by his garb; the dress of a slave was to be of one colour; that of a soldier of two; a commanding officer was permitted to wear three colours; the garb of a gentleman who kept hospitable tables for the entertainment of strangers, was to be of four colours; five colours distinguished the nobility; the king, queen, and other members of the royal family, were confined to six; and historians and persons of eminent learning were permitted to wear the same number of colours as the king.

Ollamh Fodhla, (Fodhla the sage) who lived, according to the poets, somewhat less than two hundred years after the king last mentioned, but who is placed by those historians who believe in his existence at a much shorter distance before the Christian era, was the Alfred of early Irish history. One of the most important acts said to have shed lustre on the reign of this monarch, was the establishment of the great triennial parliament or convention at Tara, at which the leading persons of the three orders of society, the monarch, the druids, and the people, were called together for the purpose of deliberating on public affairs, and passing laws. At these meetings, also, we are told that the historical records of the kingdom were revised, carefully examined, and corrected, and the result entered in the great national register called the Psalter of Tara, which is supposed to have been destroyed at the period of the Norman invasion. The native historians of Ireland refer back in triumph to this book, as containing the authentic records of Irish history from a period more remote by many centuries than the Christian era, and it is supposed that part of the contents of the Psalter of Cashel, which contains much of the fabulous history of the Irish, was copied from it. It

was, perhaps, a mere collection of bardic poems. The great legislator, Ollamh Fodhla, is said also to have established the usage which made employments and offices hereditary in families. The most important offices thus transmitted, were those of heralds, physicians, bards, and musicians, to each of which professions he assigned lands for their use; and he instituted a great school at Tara, which became afterwards celebrated under the name of Mur-ollamham, or the college of the learned. The parliament of Tara was called in Irish the Feis-teamhrach, or general assembly.

Between thirty and forty princes are now enumerated in the Irish annals as possessing the throne in succession, though they obtained it too often by usurpation and acts of violence. In fact, no very distinct law of succession appears to have been observed. It is told of one of these princes, named Lughaidh Laighe, who had slain his two predecessors on the throne, that a certain druid, who had the gift of prophecy, foretold to his father, Daire Domhtheach, that he would have a son, whose name should be Lughaidh, and who should one day wear the crown of all Ireland. Subsequently to this, Daire had in succession five sons, and that he might not miss of the fulfilment of the prediction, he gave each of them the same name of Lughaidh. When the five brothers had grown to maturity, their father went to the druid and inquired which of his five sons was destined to be monarch of the island. The druid, instead of giving him a direct answer, told him to take them on the morrow to Tailtean, where there was to be a general convention of the chief people of the kingdom, and informed him that, while the assembly was sitting, he would see a fawn running through the field, which would be pursued by the whole company. Daire's five sons, the druid said, would join in the pursuit, and one of them would overtake and kill the fawn; he it was who would reign over the whole island. Daire followed punctually the directions of the druid, and when he came next day with his sons to Tailtean, he found the assembly sitting, and almost at the same moment he saw the fawn running over the field. The whole assembly broke up in the midst of their debates to pursue the fugitive, and were of course joined by the five brothers. The chase was long and wearisome; but just as they reached Binneadair, afterwards called the Hill of Howth, a mist, raised by enchantment, threw

them off from the pursuit, with the exception of Daire's five sons, who continued to hunt the fawn as far as Dail Maschorb, in Leinster, where one of them overtook and killed it. He henceforth received the name of Lughaidh Laighe, the latter word being the Irish for a fawn. After a reign of seven years, this prince was also slain by an usurper.

On his death, three princes of the province of Ulster for a long time strove for the crown; their names were Aodh-Ruadh, Diathorba, and Kimboath. At length it was agreed between them that each should take the crown in succession during twenty-one years. Aodh-Ruadh reigned first, and at the end of his period was drowned at a place called Easruadh, leaving an only daughter named Macha Mongruadh, or the princess with the red hair. Diathorba then reigned his twenty years, and Kimboath followed. When his time for resigning the crown arrived, it became a question who should succeed, for Diathorba, who had five sons, protested against a woman being the ruler over men, and encouraged his sons to enforce their claims against Aodh-Ruadh's daughter, by an appeal to arms. But Macha was a high-spirited princess; most of the Irish chiefs took her part, and she raised an army and entirely defeated her competitors, a misfortune which Diathorba took so much to heart that he soon afterwards died of grief. His five sons, however, so far from being discouraged, raised another army, and again met the princess in the field; but they were defeated more signally than before, and were so closely pursued, that they were obliged to conceal themselves in the woods and marshes of the country. Having now assured to herself the throne, queen Macha married Kimboath. Soon after her marriage she received private information that the five brothers were concealed in the wood of Buirrim, and she determined to go herself and effect their capture, previous to which

she stained her hair, and took the dress of a peasant girl. After searching the wood for some time, she found the five pretenders boiling part of a wild boar which they had killed. They were surprised at the sight of a woman in so solitary a place, but they politely invited her to sit down and partake of the modest meal to which they told her their desperate circumstances had reduced them. In the sequel the brothers became enamoured of their guest, and a scene followed over which we may throw a veil, merely to state that the disguised queen succeeded in binding fast with cords all the five brothers, who in that condition were carried away prisoners to the court. The council of the kingdom, heartily tired of the civil war which had divided it, condemned them all to death; but the queen remitted the sentence, decreeing that as a punishment they should be compelled to erect a stately palace in the province of Ulster, in which the princes of her race should in future keep their court. Macha, we are told, drew the plan of this palace with a pin or bodkin she wore in her neck, which served to bind her hair; and hence it was called Eamhain-Macha, which in Irish signified the pin of the neck of Macha. This celebrated edifice is better known to the general reader as the palace of Emania.

Other stories are told relating to the building of this palace, which many historians ascribe to king Kimboath. It became so celebrated in Irish history, that not only were the Irish princes of Ulster henceforth universally called kings of Emania, but the date of its erection became a technical one in the Irish annals. Tigernach, one of the most esteemed of the early Irish chroniclers, has assumed this event as the dawn of authentic history. Near it stood the no less celebrated mansion of the Knights of the Red Branch, whose praise was the subject of many a lay of the Irish bards.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND PERIOD OF IRISH MYTHIC HISTORY; FROM THE BUILDING OF THE PALACE OF EMANIA TO THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.



IN spite, however, of the opinion of Tigernach, the best that we can say of the period of the Irish annals on which we now enter is, that it may possibly contain some dim shadow of real historical events. It is embellished with the same deeds of violence, adventures of knight-errantry, and stories of illicit love, which have distinguished the previous history, and mark its relationship to romance. Up to this time Ireland is represented as having been divided into a sort of pentarchy, under five different kings, one of whom was generally by mutual agreement, or by force of arms, accepted as superior lord over the other four. We have seen in the latter part of the previous history, that this superiority then rested with the kings of Ulster. The second in succession from Kimboath, according to the Irish annals, was a direct descendant of Heremon, and was named Ugaine or Hugony the Great. He, like so many of these Irish kings, obtained the crown by the murder of his predecessor, but he showed himself by his wisdom worthy of the throne, and he soon became celebrated for the prudence of his government and the extent of his power. His influence with the parliament or convention of Tara enabled him to abolish the pentarchy, and he induced the four provincial kings not only to surrender their right of succession in favour of his family, but he made them promise, by a solemn oath, not to accept a supreme monarch from any other line. In their place he established a division of the kingdom into twenty-five districts, under so many viceroys, and thus entirely broke down the power of the four subordinate, and often independent, states. The annalists inform us that this division was occasioned by the troubles excited by his own family. Ugaine had, they tell us, twenty-five children, twenty-two of whom were sons, and the latter no sooner reached manhood, than each collected a company of

soldiers, and began to oppress and plunder their father's subjects. To pacify his children, and relieve his subjects, the monarch, by the advice of his supreme council, divided his kingdom into twenty-five districts, over each of which he gave one of them the command. Ugaine was slain, after a long reign, by a man to whom Keating gives the very unharmonious looking name of Badhbhchadh, who, however, did not, like most of the early Irish regicides, succeed to the throne, but was slain by Ugaine's son, who after a short reign was murdered by his brother, and he also was eventually slain by another usurper. This last murderer, who was named Labhradh Loingseach, is the subject of several singular legends, one of which is a mere adaptation of the classic fable of Midas.

The pages of the annalist now become more barren than usual, and we have a long series of names of monarchs, of whom we are told little more than that they reigned, and were in their turns put to death. One of these regicide usurpers, named Eochaidh Feidhlioch,* who is said to have reigned not long before the Christian era, destroyed the monarchy which Ugaine had established, by again dividing Ireland into a small number of separate states. He built himself a splendid palace† in the province of Connaught, which received, after his death, the name of Rath-Cruachan. His daughter Meibh, who was twice married, reigned in Connaught after him, in whose time arose the enmity between the inhabitants of that province and those of Ulster, which has never been entirely appeased. The follow-

* The name is said to mean Eochaidh of the long sigh, and to have been given him because he laboured under so melancholy a dejection of spirits, that he was continually drawing out sighs of very immoderate length. Keating tells us, "He contracted this sadness of mind upon the loss of three of his sons, who were princes of very promising hopes, but were unfortunately slain in the battle of Dromchriadh, and this habit of sighing that was upon him followed him to his grave."

† The splendid palaces of the ancient Irish seem to have been, as far as we can gather, only wooden edifices surrounded by a dyke of earth.

ing story is told as the origin of this first war, which lasted seven years, and formed one of the favourite themes of the Irish minstrels.

The king of Ulster at this time was Conary (or Connor) the Great, a monarch who enjoyed a high reputation for his wisdom. One day he went, accompanied as usual by an eminent druid, his chief councillor, to a splendid entertainment given by his minister Feidhlim, and during the feast Feidhlim's wife unexpectedly fell in labour, and was delivered of a daughter. The druid was immediately requested to exercise his prophetic skill in foretelling the future fortunes of the child, and he said that when grown to womanhood, she would be the cause of much trouble and confusion in the kingdom. The great chieftains who were present were of opinion that the public interest required that the child should be put to death; but Conary interposed, declaring that he would take the young lady under his own charge, that she should be educated with care under his own eye, and that perhaps, when she arrived at a marriagable age, he might further disappoint the prophecy by making her his wife. The druid protested against the belief that any foresight of the king or his councillors could prevent the fulfilment of the child's destiny, and he gave it the name of Deirdre.

Conary accordingly carried the child away with him, and placed her under the care of a great poetess named Leabharcham, in the highest tower of one of his strongest castles, where a body of troops kept constant watch over her safety. Thus was Deirdre held in close confinement under the eyes of her duenna, till she grew up and became not only one of the most beautiful, but also, by the lessons of Leabharcham, one of the most accomplished women in Ireland. It happened on a time, as Deirdre and Leabharcham were looking out from a window of their tower, they saw one of the slaughtermen of the garrison killing a calf for the use of her table on a snowy day, and some of the blood fell upon the snow, and a raven came and fed upon it. The young lady was, it appears, of an amorous and romantic disposition, and this sight threw her into a sudden and strange emotion; for, turning to her duenna, she exclaimed, "Would that I were so happy as to be in the arms of a man who was of the three colours I now see, his skin as white as the driven snow, his hair glossy black like the feathers of the

raven, and his cheeks ruddy as the calf's blood!" The duenna, who had become much attached to her young mistress, and was taken by surprise with her uncommon wish, told her somewhat indiscreetly that there was a youth belonging to the court who exactly answered to this description, and that his name was Naois, the son of Visneach. For this man Deirdre conceived a violent passion, and she never rested till Naois had with great difficulty been introduced into the tower. There, after such a scene as generally occurs on similar occasions, it was agreed that the lover should attempt to deliver her from her confinement.

Naois communicated his design to his two brothers, who joined him in the enterprize, and having secretly assembled a body of a hundred and fifty armed men, they attacked the castle by surprise, overcame the guards, and carried the damsel away. They fled with their prize to the sea coast, found a ship at hand, and reached Scotland in safety, where they were hospitably received by the Scottish king. But when the latter heard of the beauty of Deirdre, he resolved to obtain possession of her by stratagem or by force, and after some hostilities between the Scots and the Irish, who had been put on their guard by private information of the king's designs, Naois was obliged to fly for refuge with his wife and companions to a small island in the sea. In this distress he had opened communications with his friends in Ireland, and, by their intercessions, the king was at last prevailed upon to pardon him the rape of the lady, and give him permission to return to Ulster in safety, and as a testimony of his good faith, he placed as hostages in the hands of the friends of Naois two persons of distinction, Feargus, the son of Roig, and Cormac Conloingios. Feargus sent his own son to the assistance of Naois, and having, with his aid, escaped from Scotland, they all landed on the coast of Ulster.

But the king's anger had never been appeased, although he pretended to listen to his councillors, and when he heard that the three sons of Visneach were on Irish ground, he sent one of his most faithful officers, named Eogan, with a strong body of troops, ostensibly to congratulate the exiles on their arrival, but with secret orders to fall upon them suddenly and slay them, and to bring away the lady Deirdre. These orders were so strictly fulfilled, that not only the three brothers and most of their followers were slain, but the son of Feargus was also killed

in an attempt to resist the treachery of Eogan, and the lady was safely lodged in the palace of king Conary.

The latter had thus delivered himself from the three troublesome sons of Visneach, but, in the execution of his treacherous design, he had provoked two new enemies, in the hostages he had given for their safety, Feargus and Cormac Conloingios. The former, who had lost his son in the skirmish, set no bounds to his anger, but, joining with other dissatisfied chiefs, he raised an army, and marched to the royal residence of Emania. Here Conary was defeated in an obstinate battle, and compelled to fly, leaving one of his sons and a great number of his friends dead on the field, and the victors plundered the palace of Emania, putting all its inmates to the sword, "not sparing," to use the words of Keating, "the ladies of the seraglio, whom the king kept for his own pleasure." Conary carried away with him the lady Deirdre, whom, finding she would receive no consolation, in a fit of revenge he gave to Eogan, the murderer of her husband, "to be used at his pleasure;" but, as he was carrying her home, she leaped out of his chariot and broke her neck.

The other hostage, Cormac, collected together his friends and adherents, and retired into Connaught, where he persuaded queen Meibh to give him protection, and join with him in making inroads into Ulster. Feargus, when he found himself unable to make head against the increasing forces of his sovereign, followed Cormac, and gained so much on the affections of Meibh, that she not only made him chief commander of her armies, but she secretly bore to him three sons at one birth, from whom some of the most distinguished families in Ireland claimed their descent. The queen and her general invaded Ulster with a powerful army, and, although they were bravely opposed by the knights of the Red Branch, a military order which enjoyed much celebrity in Irish romance, they plundered the district of Cualgne in the county of Louth, and returned home with an immense booty of cattle. This plundering expedition is considered by the Irish annalists as the commencement of the famous seven years' war just alluded to, which is from this circumstance commonly spoken of as the war of Tain-bo-Cuailgne, or spoils of the cattle at Cualgne. Before it was appeased, king Conary, his slayer Ceat, queen Meibh, her paramour Feargus, as well as Cuchullin,

Conal Cearnach, and other heroes of the Red Branch, were murdered or slain in the field. These events have a peculiar interest, from the circumstance that some fragments of the Irish romantic lays commemorating them are supposed to have contributed chiefly in suggesting to Macpherson the forgery of the poems of Ossian. The Irish annalists place the death of Cuchullin in the second year of the Christian era.

The first century after the birth of Christ contains another long list of Irish kings, few of whom have obtained any celebrity in the Irish annals; but it is represented as a period convulsed by social revolutions, in which the best of the old Milesian blood perished. The first of these civil convulsions arose from the usurpations of the literary or bardic order, which, having been surrounded by a multitude of privileges and immunities, had become so powerful and overbearing, that the liberties of the people were threatened by its encroachments. A popular reaction was the consequence, and the whole order was on the point of being suppressed. But at this moment Conquovar, king of Ulster, came forward in its support, and by his influence an arrangement was made, by which the bardic order was subjected to extensive reforms, and their civil power was limited. This monarch caused a digest of the ancient laws to be compiled, which received the name of the Breathe Neimhidh, or Celestial Judgments. King Criomthan, or, according to others, his successor Fiachadh, was contemporary with Agricola, the Roman commander in Britain; but the Irish writers, instead of placing their countrymen in any danger from an invasion by the Romans, make them send expeditions to Scotland to encourage and assist the Caledonians in invading the Roman province, whence they returned to Ireland laden with spoils. The death of the monarch who led this expedition was followed almost immediately by the great plebeian insurrection.

It appears from the very doubtful authorities with which we have now to deal, that the Fir-Bolgs, who formed a large portion of the population of Ireland, especially in Connaught, had been held in a state of great oppression by their Milesian conquerors, and different circumstances at this moment urged them to a revolt. Their design was favoured by some discontented chiefs, and a great public meeting held at Magh-cru, in Connaught, was fixed upon as the oppor-

tunity for the outbreak. Three kings were present at the feast, Fiachadh, the supreme monarch of Ireland, Feidh, king of Munster, and Breasal, king of Ulster, each with his queen, and with all the chief nobility of his kingdom. On the ninth day of the festival, at a preconcerted signal from their leaders, the plebeians, as they are called, arose in arms, and made an indiscriminate massacre of the defenceless guests, from which the three queens alone were allowed to escape. The success of this conspiracy led to a general insurrection throughout the kingdom, the Milesian monarchy was overthrown, and the leader of the rebels, named Cairbre Cinncait, or the cat-eared, from a peculiar conformation of his ears, was placed on the throne. The reign of this usurper lasted seven years, during which Ireland, abandoned to the rule of the rabble, was reduced to a state of the greatest distress, and the fulness of its misery was completed by a general famine, in which, according to the words of the annalists, there were throughout the kingdom "no grain on the stalk, no fruitfulness in the waters, the herds all barren, and but one acorn on the oak." The severity of their sufferings made people yearn after their old race of monarchs. The usurpation of Cairbre Cinncait is placed about the year 90 of our era.

The three queens who had escaped from the massacre of Magh-cru were all pregnant; they had taken refuge in Scotland, where each had given birth to a son. The names of the infant princes were Tuathal, Tio-bruide, and Corbulan.

The usurper Cairbre died after a reign of seven years, when his son Moran, instead of accepting the crown, bowed to the wishes of the people, and the royal race was restored in the person of Feredach, the son of Criomthan. The new reign was one of justice and prosperity, and the Milesian monarch seemed to have secured to himself the heart of his subjects. He bestowed the place of chief judge of the kingdom on Moran, who became celebrated for his righteous judgments, and whose name was given to a famous collar, which he first wore, named in Irish Iodhain Moran, or Moran's collar, which was said to give warning, by pressing against the neck of the wearer, whenever the sentence he was about to pronounce was unjust.* This monarch,

* It may be mentioned, as an instance of the rashness of the old Irish antiquaries, that when a golden collar or breastplate was found in a turf-bog in the

county of Limerick, Vallancy immediately pronounced it to be the Iodhain-Moran, or collar of justice!

from the wisdom with which he reigned, received the title of Feredach the Just; on his death, he was succeeded by his son Fiach. During their reigns the exiled queens appear to have returned with their children to Ireland. The justice of Feredach was probably shown only towards that portion of his subjects who boasted of Milesian blood. The plebeians suffered naturally enough under the vengeance of their conquerors; they were goaded into a new revolt under the reign of Fiach, and on this occasion the provincial kings took advantage of the insurrection to make war upon their superior monarch. The consequence was that, after a violent struggle, Elim king of Ulster wrested the crown of Ireland from its rightful owner, and young Tuathal, who was looked upon as the next heir, was carried back to Scotland, where he received protection from the king of the Picts, his maternal grandfather.* Elim again raised the plebeians above the Milesians, but in a short time they became weary of their own excesses, and anarchy and famine gave strength to the friends of the deposed dynasty. Encouraged by their representations, Tuathal returned to Ireland with a small army raised in Scotland, and landed at Jorru Domhrionn, where he was joined by his Irish adherents, who had already risen in arms, and were plundering the possessions of their enemies. The young prince lost no time in marching to Tara, where he found the principal men of the Milesian race assembled to welcome him, and he was proclaimed king under the title of Tuathal the Acceptable. This new revolution is fixed by the annalists in A.D. 130. The usurper Elim made an attempt to regain his power, but he was defeated and killed in the battle of Aichle. The strength of the plebeians, however, was still so great, that it required a long struggle to reduce them to obedience, and the old Irish historians tell us that Tuathal defeated them in twenty-five successive battles in Leinster, twenty-five in Connaught, and the same number in Munster.†

The reign of Tuathal was distinguished by vigour and consequent prosperity, and it makes a considerable figure in the Irish annals. He convoked, as soon as possible

* Some of the annalists make Tuathal's mother the wife of Feredach the Just, and not of Fiachadh.

† Moore observes in his note on these events, that

after his accession, the general assembly of the States at Tara, and he made them take their ancient and solemn oath that as long as Ireland should be encircled by the sea, they would acknowledge no one but of his line as their lawful monarch. Tuathal also took various measures to increase the power of the crown, and add to its possessions. With this view he separated a tract of land from each of the four provinces at the point where they meet, and adding them to a piece of land already possessed by his predecessors, he formed the whole into the county of Meath, which he appropriated as an appendage to the royal domain, under the title of "the mensal lands of the monarch of Ireland." In the four districts thus joined to Meath stood the four grand seats of the Irish monarch: on the tract taken from Munster he built the magnificent palace of Tlaetha, where on the night answering to the eve of All Saints, a great assembly was held, to light fires and perform other ceremonies in honour of the idol named Samhin. He built another royal palace in the portion taken from the province of Connaught, at the sacred hill of Usneath, where a second assembly was held on the day of the baal-fire (the first day of May). The third palace erected by this king stood in the district taken from Ulster, on the plains of Tailtean, where was held the celebrated fair and games in honour of Tailte, the last queen of the Fir-Bolgs, who was buried there: it was celebrated on the first of August. The district taken from Leinster contained the palace of Tara or Teamhair, already mentioned more than once as the scene of the triennial parliament of the ancient sovereignty. The grand assemblies held annually at these places by Tuathal were accompanied with great splendour and magnificence.

Among many measures of national improvement ascribed to this monarch, the province of Leinster alone was struck with his vengeance. We learn from the Irish accounts that the prince of Leinster, named Eochaidh Ainchean, stood so high in the favour of Tuathal, that he received in marriage his eldest daughter, the princess Dairina, a lady

"the plebeians engaged in this rebellion are in general called *attacots*, a name corrupted from the compound Irish term *attach-tuatha*, which signifies, according to Dr. O'Connor, the giant race (Prol. i. 74); but, according to Mr. O'Reilly's version, simply the plebeians." We can hardly help suspecting that the word was invented to make an identity with the wild *Attacots* of the Roman writers.

of great beauty, whom he carried homewith him to his residence. The prince of Leinster seems to have been struck as much with the charms of another sister named Fithir, as with those of the lady he married; and, after the space of about a year, he returned to the court of Tara, told king Tuathal that his daughter Dairina was dead, and declared that the only means of appeasing his grief for the loss of his wife was to allow him to marry the princess Fithir. The king, thinking to strengthen his alliance with Leinster, and thus secure the peace of Ireland, granted his request, and the marriage was celebrated with due pomp. But on arriving at Leinster, the young princess to her astonishment found her elder sister still living, and so great was her surprise and shame, that she almost instantly dropt down dead. Dairina had come to receive her sister as a visitor, entirely unconscious of what had taken place, and she was so affected at her death and at the circumstances which had occasioned it, that she struggled but a short time with a broken heart, and then followed her to the grave. King Tuathal, in his anger at the base conduct of his son-in-law, laid a heavy tribute on the men of Leinster, who were compelled to pay every second year six thousand of the fairest cows, and the same number of ounces of pure silver, of rich mantles, of fat hogs, of large sheep, and of strong polished caldrons. This disgraceful tax continued to be levied on the men of Leinster during about five hundred years, and was the cause of much bloodshed and confusion, until, in 693, it was remitted through the intercession of St. Moling.

Three kings now reigned and slew each other in succession, and then came Feidhlim the Legislator, whose accession is placed about the year 164, and under whom the laws of the kingdom were again revised and reformed. He was one of the few Irish kings who was permitted to die in peace. His son was the famous Con of the Hundred Battles, whose deeds furnished so many themes for the Irish bards, and who succeeded to the crown after a short interval which followed the death of his father.

As his name would lead us to suppose, Con was engaged in continual hostilities with the subordinate princes of the island. His most celebrated war was that against Mogha-Nuad, king of Leinster, who defeated Con in ten sanguinary battles, and compelled him to give up to him one-half of the kingdom of Ireland, a division which

is said to have existed in reality but one year. But in common talk the division was remembered to a very late period, the northern part of Ireland being spoken of as Leath-Cuinn, or Con's half, and the southern as Leath-Mogha, or Mogha's half. In the sequel Mogha-Nuad was treacherously slain by his rival Con, who also fell by the hands of assassins after a reign of twenty years. He was alone without guards in his palace of Tara, when fifty men hired by Tiobraide Tireach, king of Ulster, entering in the disguise of women, fell upon the hero of so many battles, and put him to death.

Con was succeeded on the throne by his son-in-law, Conary; whose son Cairbre Riada retired into Scotland and established the Irish settlement in Argyshire, which was named from its founder Dalriada, and grew up into a kingdom which, after the destruction of the Picts by Keneth Mac Alpine, gave the reigning family to Scotland. Conary's successor was the only surviving son of the warlike Con, named Art Aonfhair, or Art the Melancholy. Art's son by a concubine, Cormac Ulfadha, or Cormac the Hairy, obtained the throne of his father, according to the Irish chronology, in A. D. 254, after a short period of civil commotions, during which it fell into the power of more than one usurper. Romantic incidents attended the marriage as well as the birth of Cormac. There lived, we are told, an eminent and wealthy tradesman in the province of Leinster, named Buiciodh Brughach. This man was so remarkable for his hospitality, that he made it his practice to keep a large caldron always boiling on the fire, full of flesh and provisions for the entertainment of passengers who came that way, whom he received freely and without distinction, neither asking who they were nor whence they came. He had so much cattle of all kinds, that he is said to have possessed at one time seven herds of cows, each herd consisting of seven score, as well as immense flocks of sheep, and a noble stud of fine horses. The principal people of Leinster would often visit Buiciodh Brughach with their whole family and retinue, and quarter themselves upon him for some time, and when they left they scrupled not to carry away a drove of his cows, or to lay hands upon some of his horses and mares, for which they never thought of making him any kind of return. In this manner, Buiciodh soon became impoverished, and when at last his whole fortune was reduced to seven cows and a bull,

he removed with it secretly by night from his house at Dun Buiciodh, and taking with him his wife and his foster-child Eithne Ollamhdha, a maiden of great beauty, he travelled till he came to an extensive forest in the county of Meath, which was much frequented by king Cormac. In the wildest part of the wood he built a small hut with turf and branches, which served for a lodging for himself and his wife, as well as for the fair Eithne, who performed the duties of a servant towards her foster parents.

One day it happened that king Cormac rode out to divert himself in this wood, and chance led his steps to the neighbourhood of Buiciodh's hut, where he saw Eithne milking the cows, and he was immediately struck with her beauty. He observed that she had two vessels, into one of which as she took each cow she placed the richer and better part of the milk, and poured the thin milk into the other. When she had finished this task, Cormac, who remained concealed behind the branches, followed her with his eyes into the cottage, and soon had the satisfaction to see her return, with two vessels and a bowl, which she carried to a neighbouring spring of water, and using the bowl to lade with, she filled one vessel with the water that was near the surface, and poured into the other that which she laded from the middle of the spring, and which was cooler and clearer than the rest. She returned from the hut a third time, with a reaping-hook in her hand, and proceeded to a place where rushes grew, which she cut with her reaping-hook, and carefully separating those that were long and green from those that were short or withered, she laid them in different heaps. Cormac, unable any longer to repress his curiosity, rode up to her. The maiden was at first alarmed at being accosted by a man of rank in this solitary place, but he removed her fears by his words and behaviour, and, in answer to his questions, she informed him that she had made the selection of the best parts of the milk, water, and rushes, for her foster-father Buiciodh Brughach, who had brought her up from her infancy. The king immediately drew the hospitable herdsman from his confinement, gave him a valuable piece of land, well stocked with cattle, in the neighbourhood of Tara, and made the beautiful Eithne his queen.

Cormac was celebrated, not only for his magnificence and political talents, but he was a distinguished scholar, and he is said

to have made great reforms in the druidical and literary orders, and even to have discouraged the superstitions of paganism, and expressed opinions on religious matters which might fairly entitle him to the character of a free-thinker. Many of the military and political institutions ascribed to this king long outlived his age. He is said, moreover, to have endowed three academies at Tara: the first devoted to the cultivation of the science of war, the second to historical literature, and the third to jurisprudence. He also caused the annals of the kingdom, which, it is pretended, were kept regularly in the Psalter of Tara since the days of Ollamh, to be subjected to a general revision, and to be corrected and improved by the wisdom of the learned men of his court. In the course of his reign, considerable additions were made to the ancient code of laws entitled the Celestial Judgments.

Cormac appears to have been, in spite of his wisdom and scholarship, of an amorous disposition, and the charms of queen Eithne were not sufficient to rivet his affections to one object. On one occasion some of the chiefs of Ulster embarked in a marauding expedition to the coasts of Scotland, and among other plunder they carried off the beautiful Ciarnuit, daughter of the king of the Piets. King Cormac soon obtained possession of this prize, and he fitted up an apartment for the damsel in his palace at Tara, and "valued her beyond all the ladies of his court." The latter soon became jealous of her superiority, and the queen especially, who, however humble she might have been when she tended her foster-father's cottage, was now remarkable for her high spirit, resolved on taking vengeance upon the beautiful cause of the neglect shown to herself. By dint of expostulations and threats, she prevailed upon the king, who still loved his lawful consort, to deliver Ciarnuit into her hands, and as a punishment she placed her in close confinement, and obliged her to grind with a quern, or hand-mill, nine quarters of corn every day. The king, however, contrived still to gain access to her, and from this intercourse she became with child. As the time of her delivery drew near, she complained to her royal lover, with tears, of her inability to fulfil the cruel task which was still rigorously imposed upon her, and he delivered her from her servitude by bringing over from Scotland a skilful mechanic, who erected a mill that did the work without

hands. Thus were corn-mills introduced into Ireland.

After a reign of some years, chequered by wars and rebellions, this accomplished prince lost one of his eyes in resisting a traitorous attack in his palace, and it being a fundamental law of the kingdom that no one affected with a personal blemish should be capable of wearing the crown, Cormac abdicated the supreme power in favour of his son Cairbre Liffeachair, and retired to spend the rest of his days in a thatched cabin at Aicill, or Kells, in the same forest where he first met his wife Eithne. There he devoted himself to literary pursuits, and composed several works, of which the most celebrated was "The advice to a king," which he wrote for the instruction of his son and successor Cairbre, and which Keating describes as "worthy to be inscribed in golden characters for the information of princes, and as a most complete standard of policy to all ages." This book is said to have been extant as late as the seventeenth century, as well as a poem ascribed to the same royal author on the virtues of the number Three.

Among the chiefs who are stated to have lived in the reign of Cairbre, were Oisín, the son of Finn, (the Ossian of modern writers) and Finn Mac Cumhal, better known as Finn Mac Coul or Fingal, on whose names, and the remains of Irish romance relating to them, Macpherson built his splendid forgeries. These two individuals were chieftains of the celebrated Fianaa-Eirinn, or militia of Erin, the ancient national army whose exploits have been so often sung by the bards, and which was suppressed for its turbulence by king Cairbre. It had in fact been for some time divided into two rival septs, the clanna Boisgne, commanded by Oisín, and the clanna Morna, which was protected by the king of Munster. Continual feuds led to frequent and violent contentions, and one of these, between Goll and Finn Mac Cumhal, near Finn's palace at Almhain, on the mountain of Allen, in Leinster, had risen to such a height that it could only be appeased by the intervention of the bards, who shook the chain of silence between the chiefs, and succeeded in calming their animosity. The clanna Boisgne had become so presumptuous under the government of Cairbre, that they set the monarch of Ireland himself at defiance, and, assisted by the king of Munster, they made head against the royal

troops in the sanguinary battle of Gabhra, from which scarcely a man of the rebellious army escaped, except their leader Oisín. The victorious monarch slew Oisín's son, Osgar, with his own hand, but he himself received a wound which he survived but a short time. The causes of this war, the events which attended it, and its continuation during some following reigns, are the subject of many of the old poems and of the traditional legends of the Irish people. Two successive kings perished in battle against the insurgents, and the sanguinary battle of Dubhchomar, early in the fourth century, placed an usurper on the throne in the person of Colla Huas, one of three brothers bearing the same name.

Within five years, however, the rightful line was again restored in the person of Muredach Tíry, who compelled the usurper to abdicate, and the three Collas took refuge, with three hundred followers, in Scotland. They returned after a year's absence, and being, by the intervention of the druids, taken into the confidence of king Muredach, they were enabled by him to embark in new wars, and succeeded in depriving the king of Ulster of his dominions. In the course of this war, after a battle said to have lasted six days, the royal palace of Emania was entirely destroyed by the victorious army. Little need be said of the succeeding monarchs, until we come to the reign of Nial of the Nine Hostages, who reigned at the close of the fourth century of the Christian era. This king, after having carried over an army to Scotland to

assist the Dalreadic colony against the Picts, joined in a still more formidable invasion of the western districts of Britain, now left defenceless by the retreating Romans. Not content with this, or rather his appetite for plunder sharpened by the rich booty he carried home, Nial is said to have subsequently invaded Gaul, from which he brought home large numbers of captives with his plunder; but in a second expedition to Gaul, his career was suddenly cut short in the neighbourhood of Boulogne, where he was assassinated by one of his own soldiers. Dathy, who succeeded Nial on the throne of Ireland about the year 406, followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, and not only ravaged the maritime districts of Gaul, but marched inland until he reached the foot of the Alps. He was there killed by a flash of lightning, and his army immediately returned, bringing with them to Ireland the body of their king, who was interred with great pomp at Roilicna-Riogh, in Cruachan, the grand cemetery of the Milesian kings. He is said to have reigned twenty-three years, and was the last of the pagan kings of Ireland.*

* These pretended expeditions into Gaul bear a singular resemblance to the similar expeditions ascribed to king Arthur, in the fabulous history of Geoffrey of Monmouth. In the dark obscurity which involves our knowledge of the history of this period, we cannot say that Irish marauders may not have infested the Gallie coasts, as no doubt they did the coasts of Britain, where they took a part in the internal wars at the end of the Roman occupation. But we know enough of the history of Gaul, to be assured that no invasions, like those ascribed in the Irish annals to Nial and Dathy, took place there.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST AGES OF CHRISTIANITY IN IRELAND.



HE time was now arrived when the "sacred isle" of antiquity was destined, under a totally new faith, to merit the appellation of "the island of saints." The history of early Christianity in Ireland is obscure and doubtful, precisely in proportion as it is unusually copious. If legends entered largely into the

civil history of the country, they found their way tenfold into the history of the church, because there the tendency to believe in them was much greater, as well as the inducements to invent and adopt them. Although legends are not history, they form no unimportant portion of it, for they often paint to us the character and sentiments of the age better than history itself, and in the present instance they at least give us the notions formed at the earliest period when we have

any historical records of the conversion of the Irish. We must be content with these notions until we arrive at a period when contemporary and authentic documents come to our aid.

Among the captives said to have been brought into Ireland by king Nial, from his first expedition to the Gallic court, supposed by chronologists to have occurred in the year 403, was a youth of sixteen, to whom history has given the name of Patrick. On their arrival in Ireland, he was sold as a slave to a chief named Milcho, who carried him to his home in the north, in a district now known as the county of Antrim. According to some accounts he was there employed as a shepherd; according to others it was his duty to tend his master's swine; all agree that, during six years of bondage, the leisure of the young captive was constantly devoted to prayer and meditation. The principal scene of Patrick's devotions was the solitary mountain of Sleibh-Mis, celebrated for more than one remarkable event in the annals of Ireland. The manner in which the youth escaped from servitude is also differently related: according to one account, there was a law at that time in the island that all slaves should become free in the seventh year of their bondage; the common legend states, that by divine intimation he discovered a treasure which enabled him to purchase his liberty;* but the generally received version of the story is, that in obedience to an admonition from heaven, conveyed to him in a dream, Patrick fled from his master, reached the south-western coast of Ireland in safety, and there embarked in a merchant vessel, which carried him home to Gaul. There are almost as many conflicting claims to the honour of being the birth place of St. Patrick, as there were in the case of Homer; various legends make him a native of Britain, of Wales, of Gaul, of Ireland, and even of Scotland, but most of them agree in stating that his mother was named Conquessa, and that she was the sister of St. Martin of Tours. To him Patrick now went to seek the instruction which his misfortune had deprived him of the opportunity of gaining, and in his college at Tours, he is said to have become not only profoundly learned in the

theological doctrines of the catholic church, but a proficient in a variety of languages, including the British, Gallic, Irish, Latin, and Greek.* He next placed himself under St. Germanus of Auxerre, and with him and in Italy he spent several years in perfecting himself in the monastic discipline.

In 429, St. Patrick is said to have accompanied the two Gallic saints, Germanus and Lupus, in their pretended expedition to Britain, to eradicate from that country the errors of Pelagianism. Long previous to this, he appears to have aspired to be the apostle of the still Pagan Irish, to convert whom an unsuccessful attempt was made by a deacon of the Roman church named Palladius, represented as having been sent thither by Pope Celestine in 431 as first bishop of the Irish; but driven from the shore by the inhospitality of the natives, he was cast by a storm on the coast of Scotland, where he died among the Picts, without having accomplished his mission. St. Germanus had recommended Patrick to the Pope as a fit person to follow Palladius, and he was on his way to the scene of his labours when he received intelligence of his death. Patrick landed first, it appears, on the coast of Dublin, some time in the year 432, but meeting with no encouragement there, and repulsed at other places on the eastern coast, he proceeded towards the north, and landed somewhere in the neighbourhood of Strangford. The legendary lives of the saint relate many miracles which he performed in his progress, chiefly acts of vengeance to punish the obstinate unbelief of the natives, and frequently directed against inanimate objects, such as depriving rivers of their fish and turning fertile districts into bogs. When he now attempted to penetrate into the interior of Ulster, the chief of the district, named Dichu, came forth with his attendants to arrest him in his route, and had even raised his sword to strike the holy preacher, when his hand was arrested by a miracle, and this, joined with the eloquence of the missionary and the sanctity of his aspect, so far worked upon Dichu,

* A very ancient sequence of the saint, printed by Messingham from an old manuscript, says:—

A piratis venditur,
Fit custos porcorum;
Aurum quo redimitur
Reperit decorum.

* The oldest life of St. Patrick was composed about the end of the tenth century by a Latin author named Probus. In the twelfth century appeared the two larger lives, by William of Malmsbury, and Jocelin of Furness. These are the oldest authorities for the legend, if we except a narrative in Latin, said to be written by Patrick himself, and entitled his *Confession*, but believed by the best writers to be a spurious production.

that he and the whole of his family were converted to the word of God. Under his protection St. Patrick began to preach and celebrate divine worship in a humble barn near his residence, which from that time took the name of Sabhul-Phadruig, or Patrick's Barn; he afterwards built a church on the site, and made it his favourite resort.

The bitterest enemies of Christianity were the druids, whose interest it was above all others to support the ancient belief of their forefathers; and many of these, who are described in the Christian narrative as magi, or magicians, were the objects of Patrick's miracles, and were sacrificed for their obstinate hostility. A druid of Dichu's territory carried his insults so far as contemptuously to interrupt the holy service one day that St. Patrick was administering in the barn of Sabhul-Phadruig, on which the earth suddenly opened and swallowed up the sacrilegious offender. Dichu had a brother named Rius, an old man, as wicked as he was ugly, who, enraged at the conversion of Dichu and at the fate of the druid, persecuted the saint by every means in his power. At last the aged blasphemer dared him to perform a miracle on his person as a condition of his believing in the Gospel; Patrick held up his hand, and the ugly old man was suddenly changed into a beautiful youth. A miracle like this was not to be resisted; Rius was immediately baptized, and his example was followed by many of those who had hitherto refused to listen to the words of salvation.

Patrick was now seized with a violent desire to visit the scene of his earlier devotions, the mountain of Sleibh-Mis, and he hoped to effect the conversion of his old master, Milcho. He proceeded, therefore, to his residence in the district of Dalaradia, inhabited by the Irish Picts, but he found in Milcho one of the most obstinate champions of the ancient Paganism, who, furious at the progress made by his quondam slave in the hearts of his countrymen, is said in a fit of madness to have set fire to his own house and substance, and thrown himself into the flames. His two daughters listened to the preacher, and were baptized. St. Patrick returned into Down, converting on his way a young swineherd, who afterwards obtained a place in the Irish calendar as St. Mochua; and he soon afterwards baptized another youth, who became his inseparable companion, and is still better known in Irish

legend by the name of St. Benignus. It is not necessary for us to follow the legendary lives any further in their enumeration of the particular conversions and miracles of the saint.

When St. Patrick set foot in Ireland, the king of the island was Laogaire, the son of Nial of the Nine Hostages, who had succeeded Dathy in A.D. 427 or 428. He is represented in the legendary histories of St. Patrick as a tyrannical prince, devoted to the gentilism of his ancestors, the slave of his druids and magicians, and consequently a bitter enemy of the Christians. While St. Patrick remained in Down, Easter approached, the period at which the princes and states of the whole kingdom were to hold their grand assembly at Tara; and the courageous preacher of the Gospel determined to attend there, and proclaim publicly his mission by celebrating the Christian festival in the very heart of Paganism. He accordingly embarked in a frail vessel, and, following the coast to the south, arrived with a small party of trusty companions at the mouth of the Boyne, whence he proceeded by land to the plain of Breagh, in which the city of Tara was situated. It was at his first resting place, when leaving his ship, that he converted St. Benignus, who accompanied him to the seat of the Irish monarch. Towards the evening of the next day, which was Easter eve, the missionaries arrived at an elevated spot at no great distance from the plain of Breagh, then called Feartfethin, in the modern district of Slane, where St. Patrick determined to halt and light the paschal fire, according to the custom then observed by the Christian church. It happened that this was the very moment at which the Pagan Irish were accustomed to light the sacred fire of the bealtinne, and king Laogaire, with all the chiefs of his kingdom, and the druids and Celtic priesthood, were assembled in the royal palace of Teamhair at Tara, to perform the ceremony, previous to which, according to their usage, strict orders had been issued that every other fire in the country around should be extinguished. The bealtinne fire arose as usual in majestic grandeur, but great was the astonishment of the prince and his court when they saw it answered by the rival fires from the heights of Feartfethin. When the monarch inquired angrily who it was that had dared to infringe the law which had been rendered sacred by the usage of centuries, one of his principal druids, who

boasted, like the rest of his order, of the gift of prophecy, came forward, and, addressing Laogaire, said, "O king, the fire which we see, unless it be extinguished this night, will burn for ever, and it will rise above all the fires of our ancient rites; and the man who lights it will, before long, scatter thy kingdom." So, in the first impulse of his anger, the king gathered together his chariots and his horsemen, and hurried forwards to extinguish at once the fire by which he was threatened; but his first warmth was soon abated, and he stopped half way to listen again to his druids, who persuaded the king that he was doing too much honour to the offender by going to him in person, and therefore messengers were despatched to summon St. Patrick into his presence. The meeting, according to the legend, was more like a battle than a discussion of faith and doctrines; the king's attendants rose against the missionaries to slay them, but they fell paralysed before the divine power which protected the saints, until Laogaire's queen, with the instinctive piety which so often distinguished her sex, fell reverently on her knees before St. Patrick, and prayed that the wrath of heaven might be withheld until he should have an opportunity of declaring his doctrines in peace on the morrow.

The king returned to Tara, to pass an uneasy night in his palace of Teamhair, and the legendary writers accuse him of having, under the weight of his apprehensions of what the morrow might produce, hired assassins in the different places through which the saint must pass, to take away his life. All these, however, St. Patrick escaped, and he was allowed on the day of Easter to declare and explain publicly the mysteries of Christianity before the assembled court. On his arrival at the palace, when he entered the royal hall, he found the king at supper, and no one of the guests arose to salute him, with the exception of the royal poet Dubhtach, who, suddenly struck with conviction, declared publicly his belief in Christ, and his willingness to receive the rites of baptism. From this moment, the legendist tells us, he exerted the talents which had formerly been devoted to the service of his false gods in composing poems in praise of the Almighty and his saints.*

* *Baptizatus namque et in fide Christi confirmatus carmina quæ quondam studio florescente peregit in laudem falsorum deorum, jam in usum meliorem mentem mutans et linguam, poemata clariosa composuit in laudem omnipotentis Dei et sanctorum ejus præconium.*

Laogaire and his family, however, continued deaf to the admonitions of the preacher, although no further hindrance appears to have been thrown in the way of the fulfilment of his mission, except that which he experienced from the interruptions and plots of the druids. Before leaving Meath, St. Patrick attended the celebration of the Tealtain games, and preached with success to the vast multitudes assembled on that occasion. Among his converts was the king's brother, Conal, who gave his house, called Rath-Yrtair, in the county of Meath, for a church, and it received from its new possessor the name of Donagh-Phadruig. The saint and his companions next made a progress through Connaught to the western coast of the island. In their way towards the plains of Connaught, as they passed near the royal residence of Cruachan, at day-break one morning, the missionaries came to a fair fountain, and they there began to chaunt their morning service. It happened at the same time that the two beautiful daughters of king Laogaire, Eithne and Feidhlim, had left their father's residence to proceed to the fountain to bathe, and they were astonished to find the place occupied by a group of men of saint-like appearance, clad in white garments, with books in their hands, and fancied them some of the spiritual beings with which their national creed had peopled the woods and fountains. As the two damsels approached with reverence, Patrick addressed himself to them, told them his mission, explained to them the word of God, and held forth the hope of salvation. The princesses were struck with conviction, and rejecting the errors in which they had been so carefully instructed by their father's druids, received baptism in the same fountain, and dedicated themselves to the service of Christ. Patrick now continued his journey through Connaught, con-

Jocelin. Vit. S. Patric. cap. xlv. It is hardly necessary to point out the application of the words of Boethius, lib. i., metr. 1:—

*Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi
Flebilis, heu, mæstos cogor inire modos.*

The Irish bibliographers attributed several Christian poems to the poet Dubhtach, of which some are pretended to be extant.

We may remark a considerable resemblance in the general outline between St. Patrick's mission to the court of Laogaire and that of Paulinus to Edwin the Pagan king of the Northumbrian Saxons, as related by Bede, Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. cc. 12, 13. The Saxon priest or bard Coifi acts there nearly the part of the Irish poet Dubhtach. All these legends are, in fact, built upon one another.

verting the inhabitants by thousands, ordaining priests, and building churches, and on one occasion it is remarked by the old writer of the legend that, being in a neighbourhood where stone or wood were not easily to be procured, the saint built his church of mud. From Connaught the missionaries proceeded northwards, into the district of Dalradia, and thence they passed over the mountain of "Ficoth," across the plain of Breagh, through Meath into Leinster, success attending constantly on their steps. When they had crossed a little river named Finglas, and ascended a gentle eminence about a mile from a hamlet, then called Atheliath, but since known by the name of Dublin, Patrick is said to have gazed on the spot in contemplation, and to have uttered involuntarily the prophetic words, "This hamlet, now so small, will rise in time to great celebrity; it will spread out in riches and dignity, and will go on increasing until it becomes the metropolis of the kingdom." To show his love for this place, St. Patrick struck the earth with the "staff of Jesus," which he had brought with him into the island, and a fountain sprang forth, which was afterwards called St. Patrick's well. The king or chief of the district, named Alphin, who resided here, received the missionaries with favour, and he and the inhabitants of Dublin embraced the Christian faith; and Patrick conferred his blessing on the future city, and proceeded towards the south to contend with idolaters who were more obstinate in their errors.

One of these, named Foylge, indignant at the destruction of an idol which was the especial object of his worship, placed some of his men in ambush on the road through which Patrick had to pass, and the charioteer of the saint (who appears to have travelled generally in a car), being mistaken for his master, was slain before his face. He was treated more hospitably when he entered the province of Munster, the king of which received him with great reverence in his palace on the rock of Cashel, the ancient seat of the monarchs of Monomia, or Munster. There existed a tradition that one of the earlier kings had received at this spot a divine intimation of the future establishment of Christianity in Ireland; and the prince who now reigned, with his family and people, listened to the preaching of St. Patrick, and were baptised. When the king of Munster bowed before the preacher to receive his benediction, Patrick's pastoral staff (he had

been ordained a bishop before entering upon his mission) accidentally rested on the royal foot, and piercing it, the ground was stained with his blood. Neither the saint nor the king observed the wound till the ceremony was ended, and then the former, having cured it by making the sign of the cross, held his hand over his royal convert, and added to his blessing the prophetic words, "In memory of this blood now shed, the blood of no king of thy line who shall reign in this place shall ever be shed, except one;" and the annalists of Munster ages afterwards declared that, with one exception only, the kings of that district died in peace. A magnificent church was afterwards erected on the rock of Cashel, the remains of which form one of the noblest monastic ruins in Ireland; and in it is still preserved the Leac-Phadruig, or Patrick's-stone, the table on which the kings of Munster were crowned. St. Patrick remained several years labouring in the conversion of the people of Munster and Connaught before he returned to Ulster, the first scene of his success. He had already built churches on most of the spots which had been previously consecrated to the rites of druidism; but when he came to Usneach in Meath, a place celebrated in Irish fable, with the intention of founding a church there, he was driven away opprobriously by the two chiefs of the district, who were brothers, and the saint was proceeding to strike them with his malediction, when his disciple St. Secundinus interfered, and begged that the curse might be laid on the stones of the neighbourhood. In consequence of this curse, the stones of Usneach became unfit for building, and if any one persisted in erecting a house with them, it never failed to fall down soon after it was completed. The cursed stones of Usneach became proverbial among the Irish.

After having thus planted the Gospel in all the four provinces of Ireland, St. Patrick was desirous of perfecting its ecclesiastical government, and he prepared for the establishment of a metropolitan see. For this purpose he selected an elevated place, not far from the ancient palace of Emania, then called Druim-Saileach, of which he obtained a grant from the king of the district, and there he built the cathedral of Armagh. At this place, and at his favourite retreat at Sabhul-Phadruig, where he had first preached the Gospel to the Irish, St. Patrick is said to have passed the remainder of his life. The legend states, that after the establish-

ment of the see of Armagh, the saint went to Rome, to obtain from the Pope a confirmation of all he had done in his mission, and the grant of privileges to his church; but the more judicious writers on the subject who accept the outline of the history of St. Patrick, have declared their belief that he never left Ireland after he entered the island as a missionary of the faith of the Redeemer. It was on his return from this alleged visit to Rome, that St. Patrick is said to have performed the celebrated miracle by which he collected together the venomous reptiles from every part of Ireland on the summit of a mountain on the coast of Mayo, called from this circumstance Cruach-Phadruig, and from thence hurled them into the waves of the Atlantic. We are told that from this moment Ireland has been free from every kind of noxious reptile; but it must not be forgotten that the island possessed this character long before the age in which the saint is supposed to have lived, as we perceive from the Roman writers. The legend adds that Patrick cleared the island of demons at the same time he drove away its reptiles, and that in a short time it became so filled with holy monks and nuns, that it received by pre-eminence the honourable title of "the island of saints."

About the year 465, according to the calculation of the best chronologists, St. Patrick was seized with a severe malady, in his retirement at Sabhul, and feeling the approach of death, he set out to reach Armagh, which he wished, as his episcopal see, to be his last resting place. He had proceeded part of the way in his slow progress, when, warned, it is said, by the voice of an angel, which told him it was God's will he should die in Ulster, at the place where his preaching first met with success, he returned to Sabhul-Phadruig, and died there a week after, on the 17th of March, 465, (on which day his festival is kept), having then reached the seventy-eighth year of his age. Some of the legends make him live to the advanced age of a hundred and thirty. His convert St. Brigid attended at his death-bed. The news of St. Patrick's death was soon carried abroad, and the clergy crowded from all parts to be present at his obsequies, the ceremonies attendant upon which lasted during several days. It had been made known to the saint before his death, that heaven willed him to be buried in Down; but the people of Armagh were jealous of the treasure which was thus to be given to

the keeping of their neighbours of Ulster, and when the day of burial came they assembled in great numbers, resolved to attack the convoy, and carry off the body of the saint. A cart drawn by oxen carried the corpse in solemn procession towards Down, when the people of Armagh made a sudden onset, seized upon the cart, and turned the heads of the oxen towards the episcopal see. Thus they proceeded until they came to the borders of Armagh, and were passing a little river called Caucune, when, to their surprise, cart, and oxen, and corpse, suddenly disappeared, and they found that they had been following a shadow, miraculously raised up to draw them away, while the real body of the saint had proceeded without interruption to Down, where it was safely deposited in the earth, and a handsome church was afterwards built over his remains. The bodies of his disciple St. Brigid and of St. Columba were afterwards deposited in the same grave.* In later times the monks of Malmsbury had forged, or received from tradition, a legend that Patrick had left Ireland in his later years, and become abbot of their house, and that the body of the saint, as well as those of his disciples Brigid, Benignus, and Indractus, lay buried in Malmsbury church, and they claimed the honour of possessing these relics with so much persistance, that we are assured many Irishmen went thither in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to pay reverence to their holy remains.

Among the more celebrated females said to have been converted by the preaching of St. Patrick, was St. Brigid, already mentioned as attending on his death-bed, who, it is pretended by some of his biographers, wove the shroud in which he was buried. Other writers, however, place the birth of Brigid only a few years before Patrick's death. St. Brigid is regarded as the introducer of female monachism into Ireland. According to the legend as given in Capgrave, there was a man of Leinster named Dubhtach, who bought a captive maiden named Brochsech, whom, as was then a common practice, he compelled to submit to his embraces. When Dubhtach's wife saw the servant was pregnant, she became sorrowful, and said to her husband, "Go and sell the maiden, lest her offspring,

* A Leonine distich, popular in the middle ages, commemorated the place of burial of the three saints:—

In burgo Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno
Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba pius.

if brought up in thine house, should some day lord it over mine." The man, with some reluctance, obeyed his wife, and sold Brochsech to a magician or druid, in whose house she soon afterwards became the mother of St. Brigid, who in spite of the example set her by her master (for the daughter of a serf remained always a serf), was at a very early age seized with the love of Christian piety, and at length, when freed by the interference of the king or chief of the district, she took the veil, and collecting a number of her sex, who burnt with the same devotional ardour, she established the first Irish nunnery.

Brigid established her first cell under the shade of a lofty oak, which was probably rendered sacred by the superstitions of druidism, for the earliest Christian establishments among the converted Pagans of the West were almost invariably established on the sites of older heathen worship. This rude establishment was from this circumstance named Kill-dara, or the cell of the oak, and, increasing rapidly in extent from the crowds of devotees attracted thither by her sanctity, it became the nucleus of the city since so well known by the name of Kildare. A further proof of the sacred character of the spot selected by Brigid for her monastery, is found in the circumstance that the holy fire which the druids had nourished there, was taken under the charge of the sisterhood, and so well did the Virgins of Christ attend to it, that Giraldus Cambrensis, at the end of the twelfth century, reports the common belief that during so many ages the sacred fire of St. Brigid at Kildare had never been extinguished.

In her pious retreat at Kildare, St. Brigid was the sure refuge of the unfortunate, especially of those of her own sex, and the island was soon filled with the reports of her charity, her benevolence, and her miracles. Of these, we may repeat two, as pictures of the manners of the age. The first illustrates the legendary story of her own birth. A certain chief of Leinster, of a wicked and luxurious disposition, but of great power, lived at no great distance from Kildare; his lust was excited by the charms of a woman of the neighbourhood, who refused to listen to his advances, and he set his mind to work to contrive the means of obtaining possession of her. With this object, he one day entrusted to her care a silver brooch, which he afterwards caused to be purloined by

stealth, and thrown into the sea. When the maiden, on being required to restore the article entrusted to her, was unable to give any account of it, her persecutor accused her of theft, and demanded that she should be delivered to him as his slave, and the law or the custom of the land, it appears, recognised his claim. The maiden, seeing no way left of preserving her chastity, fled to the cell of Kildare, and invoked the protection of its holy occupant; and St. Brigid received her with kindness, and invoked heaven in her favour. In the course of their interview a fisherman brought some fish he had newly caught as an offering to the saint, in one of which was found the identical brooch of silver, the loss of which had caused so much sorrow.

On another occasion, one of her countrymen was entering the king's palace, when he saw a fox walking across the path. Ignorant of the fact that it was a tame animal to which the monarch was much attached on account of the entertaining tricks it had been taught to perform, and taking it for a wild beast, the visitor struck it with his weapon and slew it. The king, in great anger, condemned the offender to death, unless he produced immediately another fox equally well instructed with the one he had killed. The task was an impossible one, and the unfortunate individual who had thus forfeited his life prepared to meet his fate, when St. Brigid came unexpectedly to his assistance. Having heard the circumstances of the case, she ordered a horse to be harnessed to her car, and proceeded in all haste towards the king's court. Her way lay through a wood, and as she passed it she called out, and a wild fox instantly emerged from the brushwood, walked tamely towards the car, and, leaping up, seated itself quietly by her side. With this companion she continued her journey, and when ushered into the presence of the monarch, and informed of his grief for the loss of his tame animal, she ordered her fox to stand forth, on which it went through all the performances of the deceased fox with so much exactitude, that the king was delighted beyond measure, and ordered the man who had offended through ignorance to be set at liberty.

The death of St. Brigid is placed in the year 525, when she is said to have reached her seventy-fourth year. She is generally supposed to have been buried at Kildare, but the people of Ulster declared that her remains had been deposited at Down, by the

side of those of St. Patrick, and the Picts and Scots were equally obstinate in the belief that they lay at Abernethy. We have already stated that the monks of Glastonbury fancied their monastery to have been her last resting-place. It was about the period of her death that the pious legends make the island to abound most in holy professors of the Gospel; and one of them assures us that the school of Finian, abbot of Cluain-eraird (Clonard), whom he styles the "master of the saints of Ireland," ("magister sanctorum Hiberniæ,") contained alone "three thousand saints." One of these was the celebrated St. Columba, more popularly known as Columbkille, who is stated to have been four years old at the time of St. Brigid's death, having been born in 521. He soon distinguished himself above all his fellows by the ardour of his religious zeal, and when no more than twenty-five years of age he founded a monastery at Doire Calgach, near Lough Foyle, from whence the name of Derry was subsequently derived. He soon founded another monastery in the south of Meath, at a spot named Dair-magh, or the Plain of Oaks, which was long celebrated in the ecclesiastical history of Ireland. Columba appears subsequently to have been driven out of Ireland by the feuds of the native princes, to whom his fiery zeal seems often to have given offence; and he settled in the island of Hy, or Iona, where he founded that famous monastery which was the star of the Christianity of Scotland and the western isles. He died at Iona, it is said, in his seventy-sixth year.

From his favourite isle in the western waves, Columba is represented as constantly interfering in the political affairs of Ireland, as well as of Scotland. His relationship by blood with some of the most powerful and turbulent of the Irish chiefs, gave him a peculiar interest in all the social movements of his native country. One of the most remarkable events in which he is said to have taken an active part, was the great convention at Drumceat, which was called together to deliberate on a difficult question relating to the sovereignty of the Irish district of Dalaradia. At this assembly new complaints arose against the influence and tyranny of the bardic or literary class, and they had become so unpopular by their numbers and insolence, that it was again proposed to suppress all their privileges. But Columba stood forward in their defence,

and they are said to have been saved, with some of their immunities, by his exertions alone. Perhaps he considered himself as belonging in some degree to their order. A story, told by the writers of his life as an instance of his miraculous foresight of future events, shows us that he was not unwilling to associate with the bards of his native land. One day, we are told, as the saint and his brethren were resting themselves in a house near a river in Ireland, they received a visit from an Irish "poet," or minstrel, named Coronan. When he was gone, the companions of Columba inquired why he had permitted Coronan to depart without asking him to chaunt one of his usual lays. The saint replied, "How could I ask for a song of joy from that miserable man, who at this moment, struck by the weapons of his enemies, is in the agonies of death!" These words were scarcely uttered, when the whole party were roused by a cry from the other side of the river, and a man informed them that the bard who had been their guest had just been murdered.

We cannot read these lives of the early Irish saints without being struck with the remarkable manner in which the Pagan institutions continued to exist under Christian names and forms. The sacred virgins of gentile Ireland were perpetuated in the nuns of St. Brigid, who continued to tend the holy fire that in earlier times had so often lit the baaltinne at Tara; and in like manner the druids, with their inviolable character, their visions of second sight, and their powers of prophecy, continued to live in the persons of the Christian monks, who were now called upon as councillors by the Irish chiefs, precisely in the same manner as they had formerly consulted their druids. This was peculiarly the case with the St. Columba of the Christian legend, and it is perhaps to the Pagan superstitions of his countrymen that we must attribute his visions and prophecies. Thus the Irish king Aldan, before going to battle, went to ask Columba which of his three adult sons was destined to succeed him on the throne. Columba answered, "Neither of those three will reign, for they will be slain before thee in the war; but thou hast younger sons, bring them to me, and he who shall rush into my arms will be thy successor." The king did as he was told, and one of his younger children, named in the legend Euchodius, went directly to the saint and threw himself in his bosom. This child became king after his father.

People of all ranks went in this manner to consult St. Columba on future events. Once, according to the legend, two "plebeians" went to him in Iona to inquire what would be the fate of their two eldest sons. To the first he said, "It is now Saturday; thy son will be dead next Friday, and will be buried in this island this day week." To the other inquirer he said, "Thy son will live to see his grand-children, and he also will be buried in this island, but at a very advanced age."

It must be acknowledged that, with all this seemingly abundant information, the history of early Christianity in Ireland is involved in the greatest obscurity. The name of St. Patrick, totally unknown to Bede, who took so much interest in the Irish church, and obtained all his information from Irish ecclesiastics, is not mentioned in any writing in the authenticity of which we can place confidence previous to the tenth or eleventh century. The same may be said of St. Brigid; and the "lives" of the other Irish saints are probably none of them so old, if we except only that of Columba ascribed to Adamnan.* Yet we are sure that, by whatever means it may have been introduced, Christianity was established in Ireland in the sixth century, and that men who afterwards attained to high celebrity in the history of Europe went thence to aid in the conversion of the Franks and the Germans. Among these we may mention the names of St. Columbanus and St. Gall, who were born towards the middle of the sixth century; Columbanus settled at Luxeuil, in eastern France, while St. Gall proceeded to Switzerland, and laid the foundations of the celebrated abbey which has ever since been known by his name. Among the numerous manuscripts in the rich library of this establishment are still found a few fragments written apparently in Irish, which, by their evident antiquity, may have come from the pen of some of this first band of missionaries.

* A careful perusal of the life of Columba ascribed to Adamnan, raises many doubts in my own mind as to its authenticity, and indeed as to its having been written till long after his age. It is singular that Bede, who speaks with so much interest of St. Columba, and who was well acquainted with the life and writings of Adamnan, should not mention a life of Columba by him. The language and peculiarities of the life of St. Brigid, which goes under the name of Cogitosus, also bespeak a much later period than the sixth century, when it is supposed to have been written. The writer speaks of an archbishop of Ireland; when it is generally understood that no such dignitary existed till a much later period.

The lives of the Irish saints, written in Latin, are very numerous. Like everything Irish, they are filled with wild and picturesque legends—the romance of the ecclesiastical history of Ireland. But they describe the manners of the sister island in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and not those of the fifth and sixth; although it is probable that the intervening period had produced very little change in the general character of Irish manners.* The establishment of Christianity must, however, have altered in many respects the face of society, and the institutions of public life. The monks brought in the study of the Latin language and the use of the Roman alphabet, and it soon superseded the old Irish Ogham characters, which were only applicable to inscriptions and charms, and could never be used for writing books. What we now call the Irish characters, are only a corruption of the Roman alphabet as written in the earlier ages of Christianity in the island, and they differ but little from the form of the Roman character which we call Anglo-Saxon. With the use of these characters, books began to multiply, and we are now approaching a period when we can place more confidence in the records of Irish history; at least we have not the same reasons for rejecting it. The Irish writers tell us that Dubhtach the poet, St. Patrick's bardic convert, with other persons of eminence, urged the saint to undertake a revision of the Irish annals, which he declined, on account of his own ignorance of Irish history; but they assert that a commission was appointed for the purpose under his especial superintendence. This is of course but a fable. We find, however, that from about this period the Irish annalists begin to notice the reigns of contemporary sovereigns in other countries—a first attempt at chronological accuracy.

During the period while the gospel of peace was thus planting itself on the Irish soil, we learn from the historical annals that that soil was moistened with blood which flowed from the perpetual feuds of its princes. Laogaire himself was often engaged in these domestic broils; and he was involved in a still more important war with the people of Leinster, who, guided by a chief named Criomthan, refused to pay the odious tribute which had been imposed on

* The largest collection of the lives of the Irish Saints, published in the original Latin, is that by Colgan, in folio, printed at Louvaine, in 1647.

them by king Tuathal. The troops of Connaught were defeated with great slaughter in an obstinate battle celebrated by the Irish bards, and called, from the place where it was fought, the battle of Ath-dara, or of the Ford of the Oaks. Loagaire himself fell into the hands of the victors, and he was only set at liberty after he had taken the ancient and solemn oath of his forefathers, called the "oath of the sun, wind, and elements," that during the remainder of his life he would never again claim the payment of the tribute. The Irish annalists place the battle of Ath-dara in the year 457. Within a year the monarch infringed his oath, relieved from it, it is said, by the absolution of his druids; and a few weeks afterwards, in the year 458, he was killed in an excursion among the mountains, some historians say by lightning, and his countrymen believed that it was the sun, wind, and elements, which had conspired in his destruction to revenge the slight he had put upon them by the breach of his oath.

After the death of Laogaire, the throne was occupied by an usurper, Olill Molt, descended from another branch of the family of Heremon, and the son of Dathy, Laogaire's predecessor. Lughadh, the son of Laogaire, thus excluded from his right to the sceptre, gathered together his adherents to obtain it by force of arms, and the great battle of Ocha, in which Olill Molt was defeated and slain, fixed the descendants of Nial of the Nine Hostages firmly on the throne of Ireland. The old law of succession, established by king Tuathal, which excluded from the throne all the other lines of the royal Milesian race but his own, was thus finally set aside. Twenty years after the battle of Ocha, which the Irish annalists accept as a technical period in their chronology, the sons of Eirek went from Ireland to assist the Irish Dalriadic colony established in Scotland, and contributed much to its establishment and power. From these, through the Scottish kings and the English Stuarts, the royal blood of Ireland has descended to the present royal family of England.

The reigns of the monarchs who succeeded Olill Molt were distinguished chiefly by the same petty wars which had scarcely ever ceased to devastate the island. Lughaidh is said to have reigned twenty-five years; and his successor Murcertach, the grandson of Eirek, after reigning twenty-one years and fighting five battles, was drowned in a

hogshead of wine. He is considered to have been the first Christian king of all Ireland. His successor, Tuathal Maolearbh, who ascended the throne in 527, reigned nine years, and then left it to Diarmid, the friend and patron of St. Kieran, who had helped to conceal him from persecution during the reign of his predecessor. Under this monarch occurred two celebrated events in Irish history, the foundation of the great monastery of Clonmacnois by St. Kieran, and the desertion of the palace of Tara. The latter event is placed in the year 554, and is commonly reported to have arisen from the following incident. A criminal, who had fled for sanctuary to the monastery of St. Ruan, was dragged forcibly from his asylum, and carried to Tara, where he was put to death. The abbot and his monks exclaimed loudly against the violation of the sanctuary, and, proceeding in solemn procession to the palace, they pronounced the curse of heaven on its walls. The Irish annalists tell us that "from that day no king ever sat again at Tara;" and the bards of later ages, less slavishly devoted to the church than the annalists, lamented over the fate of the ancient glory of Ireland. One of them, who is supposed to have lived near the time, exclaims mournfully, "It is not with my will that Teamhair is deserted." The monks in their exultation raised a monastery near the spot, and they gave it the name of "The monastery of the curse of Ireland"—it was the last victory of the religion of Christ over expiring Paganism.

In the pages of the native annalists, two kinds of events fill the reigns of the Irish monarchs of this period; their battles with subordinate chiefs, and their connection with monks and ecclesiastics. Diarmid, we have just seen, was the friend of St. Kieran. A rival, though afterwards a friendly monarch, the generous and charitable Guaire, king of Connaught, was the friend—some say the brother—of St. Mochua. Among other stories told of the prince and saint, there is one that furnishes a remarkable example of their wild character. Mochua once retired to a cell by a solitary fountain of pure spring water, five miles distant from his brother's palace at Durlus Guaire, that he might pass the period of Lent in strict fasting, and he took with him only a single clerk as his companion. Their single meal each day consisted of a small portion of coarse barley bread with water-cresses and water from the fountain. Mochua bore through the peni-

tential abstinence without fainting, but when Easter-day arrived, his clerk was able to support this diet no longer, and he begged in the most supplicating manner to be allowed to go to the king's table at Durlus and eat meat. St. Mochua, satisfied with the patience he had already shewn, promised to indulge his appetite, but he told him that he need not give himself the trouble to visit the palace, as the provisions should be brought to him there in his cell. The saint then fell to the ground and prayed. It happened that the servants were at that moment laying the dinner on the table before the king and his guests, and the surprise of the latter was great when they saw the dishes carried away as quick as they came by an invisible hand. They all mounted their horses, and galloped after the dishes, which they saw travelling rapidly through the air. The latter however arrived first at the cell, and presented themselves with great submission before St. Mochua and his clerk, when, after grace had been duly said by the saint, the servant fell to eating with a rather voracious appetite. Just as he had commenced, the horse-men made their appearance, and, struck with terror, he began to lament his greediness, and wish that his desire had not been listened to; but the saint told him to proceed with his meal without apprehension, and having offered a short petition to heaven, the men and their horses were fixed immoveably to the spot where they first saw them, until the clerk had eaten his fill, and then another prayer set them at liberty, and they came humbly to St. Mochua and desired his benediction. The saint immediately gave the king his blessing, and desired him and his attendants to eat their dinner in that place, and they lost no time in complying with his invitation. The road from Durlus to the fountain is still called in Irish Bothur-na-

Mias, or the road of the dishes, in commemoration of this event.

It is further related of St. Mochua that he often retired into a solitary cell, taking with him for companions no living creatures except a cock, a mouse, and a fly. The first of these animals served the purpose of a clock, and gave notice to the saint of the approach of the hour when the church required him to say his morning prayers; the mouse stationed itself at his ear, during his sleep, and roused him when his slumber had lasted the appointed time; the fly attended on him while reading, walking along the lines of the book as the saint proceeded, and when his eyes were tired and he desisted a moment from his study, the fly rested on the first letter of the next sentence to direct him where to recommence. At length these three faithful attendants died, and St. Mochua despatched a special messenger to St. Columba or Columbkil in Scotland, to acquaint him with his grief and with the cause of it, and to require his spiritual consolation. Fables like these shew us how little we can depend upon the Irish histories of the progress of Christianity in these early ages.

Two brothers, descendants of Nial, reigned after Diarmid, and were followed by several kings in succession, the annals of whose reigns are too meagre and uninteresting to merit our notice. Under Aodh, the fifth king from Diarmid, occurred the great convention to settle the claims to Dalaradia, and the attempted suppression of the bardic order, alluded to above. This reign was one of violent convulsions and sanguinary contests, which are represented as too often excited by the vindictive zeal of St. Columba, who is named by the old annalists as the direct promoter of three or four obstinate battles.

CHAPTER V.

IRELAND DURING THE EARLIER ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.



HILE Ireland was thus receiving the light of Christianity from one end of the island to the other, the neighbouring isle of Britain had changed its masters.

We know literally nothing of the events which occurred in this country from the middle of the fifth to the end of the sixth century, except the uncertain traditions of a later age—these speak of a long series of sanguinary wars, the result of which was the division of the whole portion now known as England into a number of petty kingdoms among Saxons and Angles, of which kingdoms, as in Ireland, one appears generally by the acknowledged power or wisdom of its monarch to have obtained a superior influence over the rest. The relations between the Anglo-Saxons and the Picts of the north, like those with the Britons of the west, were certainly not friendly, though both Britons and Scots had been converted to Christianity before the end of the sixth century; but we have no traces of any intercourse of the Saxons with Ireland till after the conversion of the former by the preaching of the Roman missionaries at the beginning of the seventh century. The pages of the Anglo-Saxon historian Bede furnish the first authentic notices of that island, by a contemporary, or nearly contemporary, writer since the time of the Romans. Unfortunately these notices are brief and unconnected.

Bede informs us that, in the battle of Degsastan, between Ædan, king of the "Scots who inhabit Britain," who had invaded Northumberland with his whole army, and Athelfrid, king of the Northumbrians, fought in the year 603, the Northumbrian king so entirely crushed the power of his enemies, that up to the time when this historian wrote (A.D. 731), they had never raised their heads against the Anglo-Saxons again. Twenty years after this, the kingdom of the Northumbrians had so far extended its power, that it included within its territory the isles of Man and Anglesea, the former of which is

stated in the Irish legends to have received Christianity in the time of St. Patrick. It was naturally with the kingdom of Northumbria that the Irish had their earliest intercourse.

The history of Christianity among the Britons is, if possible, more obscure than that of the conversion of the Irish. That the Gospel had not spread to any great extent in this island during the Romano-British period, seems evident from the circumstance that among the immense number of monuments of every description belonging to that period, which have been found in all parts of England, no article has yet occurred which bears the slightest reference to Christian sentiments and practices. All—and those of the later Roman period are most numerous—bear a character essentially and unmistakeably pagan. The stories of a Romano-British church found in Bede and other later writers, are evidently inventions, and it is not difficult to divine their object. Yet when the Anglo-Saxon history first becomes authentic, at the end of the sixth century, the Britons of Cornwall and Wales, as well as the Irish and Scots, were Christians. In the absence of any satisfactory clue to solve the mystery, we are led to suppose that the Gospel was planted among them by missionaries from the opposite coasts of Spain; and this conjecture is supported by the knowledge we derive from the few early allusions that the Christianity of the Irish and Britons was in many points not orthodox according to the doctrines of the church of Rome. Among the points in which their heterodoxy is most apparent in history, because it was a subject on which the Anglo-Saxon church set great importance, was the question of the correct day for the celebration of Easter. This soon became a subject of bitter hostility between the two churches in the British isles.

As early as the year 605, when the Roman missionaries had but newly established themselves in Britain, where they had immediately entered into communication with the older Christians of the west, we find Laurentius, the successor of Augustine in

the see of Canterbury, expressing his disappointment at the heterodoxy of the Irish in a letter addressed to their bishops and abbots, in which he says the Roman missionaries had come into Britain, ignorant of its inhabitants, but with a belief in the orthodoxy and sanctity of the British Christians; that when they learnt the errors of the Britons, they hoped for orthodoxy among the Scots of Ireland, and were again disappointed, for, he says, "we have been informed by bishop Dagan, coming into this aforesaid island, and by abbot Columbanus in Gaul, that the Scots in no way differ from the Britons in their behaviour; for bishop Dagan coming to us, not only refused to eat with us, but even to take his repast in the same house where we were entertained." Little more than thirty years after the first conversions among the Anglo-Saxons, we find the clergy of Rome addressing a letter to five Irish bishops, and one abbot, by name, and to the rest of the clergy of Ireland in general, accusing them of keeping Easter erroneously, and of harbouring the doctrines of pelagianism. It appears that in consequence of the admonition contained in this letter, the Christian church of the south of Ireland generally conformed to the usages of Rome. But the Irish of the north, as well as the Picts and the Scots of Britain, who all held St. Columba for their patron, and looked upon the holy monastery in the island of Iona as their metropolis, refused obstinately to depart from their own established customs.*

It is very remarkable that Bede, who was a Northumbrian, and evidently took a lively interest in the affairs of Ireland, appears to have been entirely ignorant of the existence of such a person as St. Patrick, and to have known nothing of his pretended mission. Yet, in talking of the Irish and their prelates, he speaks of having conversed with Irish priests, and having obtained from them his information; and, in introducing the disputes between the Saxon and the Pictish clergy on the subject of Easter, he takes the occasion to inform us that the latter received their faith from Ireland. There came from Ireland into Britain, he tells us, in the year 565, at the commencement of the reign of the emperor Justin, a presbyter and abbot named Columba, to preach the Gospel to the northern Picts, whom he converted, and he obtained from their king the island of Iona, in which he built a monastery, and

where, after a space of thirty-two years, he died and was buried. The abbot of this island, Bede informs us, was the primate of the church of the north of Ireland and of the Picts. Bede also speaks of Columba's older monastery in Ireland, at Dearnach, or the plain of oaks, and of numerous monasteries which had been propagated in different parts of Ireland and Scotland from these two great establishments. Monks from Iona and from Ireland frequently visited the kingdom of Northumbria, and were received into the Saxon monasteries, such as Lindisfarne; and it was probably this friendly intercourse which contributed more than anything else to soften down the prejudices that separated the two churches. On the other hand multitudes of Anglo-Saxon enthusiasts left their native land to seek in Ireland instruction which seems to have been at that time more easily procured there than in England; some of them, Bede tells us, devoted themselves there to a monastic life, while others "chose rather to apply themselves to study, going about from one master's cell to another," and he adds that the Irish "willingly received them all, and took care to supply them gratuitously, not only with food, but with books to read, and with assistance in their studies."* The Irish monks in Northumbria often rose to rank in the church, and the abbey of Lindisfarne received several of its abbots from Iona, who merited the warm encomium of Bede for their piety and humility of life, though they remained firm supporters of the doctrines of the Irish and Scottish church.

About the middle of the seventh century the question of the time of observing Easter was again warmly debated, and in 664 an attempt was made to decide the controversy in a conference held at St. Hilda's abbey of Streonshalch, where the Irish bishop Colman supporting one side of the question, appealed strongly to the example and doctrines of their great apostle Columba, and was answered by the still more celebrated Wilfrid, who had recently visited Rome to perfect himself in the Romish doctrines. It would appear that a large portion of the Northumbrian clergy were in favour of the Irish, for Colman's cause was espoused by Hilda herself, and by the Saxon bishop Cedd. The Saxon prelates, however, declared themselves convinced by the arguments

* Bede, Hist. Eccl. iii. 27. Compare on the intercourse between the Irish and Northumbrian Christians, the same writer, Hist. Eccl. iii. 13, 19, 24, 26, v. 9, 10, &c.

* Bede, Hist. Eccl. ii. 4, and 19; iii. 3, 4.

of Wilfred, and king Oswy, who presided at the conference, gave judgment in their favour; whereupon Colman, taking with him all those who refused to acknowledge the justice of the king's decision, returned to Ireland. He founded there a monastery on a small island on the coast of Connaught, called Inisboufinde, or the Island of the White Heifer, in which he placed the monks of both nations, Irish and Saxons, who had accompanied him. The history of this foundation, as given by the Anglo-Saxon historian, affords us a curious picture of Irish character, in which twelve centuries seem to have produced but little change. The monks of this early period supported themselves more or less by their own labours, for the age of rich endowments had not yet arrived. In the summer season, when the harvest was to be brought in, the Irish monks of Inisboufinde, left their monastery, and wandered about idly through places with which they were acquainted, returning at the approach of winter to share in the provisions laid up by the industry of their Saxon companions. The latter complained, and dissensions arose between them, which Colman found it necessary to put an end to by separating them. He travelled about far and near to find a place convenient for building another monastery, and at length meeting with a spot which pleased him, and which was named by the Irish Mageo (Mayo), he bought a piece of land of the chief to whom the district belonged, and built under his patronage a religious house, in which he placed his English monks, leaving the Irish at Inisboufinde.*

The ecclesiastical disputes between the two churches appear to have created no enmity between the two islands, which continued in peaceful intercourse until the year 684, when, for some reason or another at which we can only guess, Egfrid, king of Northumbria, sending an army into Ireland under one of his earls named Beret, who "miserably wasted that harmless people,

which had always been most friendly to the English," sparing, we are told, neither churches nor monasteries in their cruel devastations. The Irish are represented on this occasion as offering a feeble resistance to the hostile invasion. The year following Egfrid was defeated and slain in an invasion of Scotland, and Bede repeats the opinion of the Anglo-Saxons that this disaster was a judgment of heaven, to punish him for disregarding the admonitions of bishop Egbert, who would have restrained him from attacking the innocent Irish, "who had done him no harm."* It was Adamnan, abbot of Iona, the reputed author of the *Life of Columba*, who, in the earlier part of the eighth century, first laid the solid foundations of the conversion of the northern Irish church to the Roman doctrines on the points so long controverted.

Bede, who wrote at this period, gives the following as the statement current among his contemporaries, relating to the peopling of the British Isles. At first the larger of the two British Isles, known formerly by the name of Albion, had no other inhabitants but the Britons, from whom it derived its name, and who coming over into Britain, as is reported, from Armorica, possessed themselves of its southern provinces. After this it happened that the nation of the Picts, "from Scythia, as is reported," putting to sea in a few long ships, were driven by the winds beyond the shores of Britain, and arrived on the northern coasts of Ireland, where, finding the nation of the Scots, they begged to be allowed to settle among them, but could not succeed in obtaining their request, for the Scots said that the island could not contain them both; but they added, "We know there is another island not far from ours, to the eastward, which we often see at a distance when the days are clear. If you will go thither, you may easily obtain lands to settle in; or, if the natives should oppose you, you shall have our assistance to enable you to gain them by force." The Picts, accordingly, sailed over to Britain, to settle in the northern parts, as the Britons were possessed of the southern portion of the island. The Picts having no wives, asked them of the Scots, who gave them on condition that it should be established as a law in the new settlement, that when any difficulty should arise relating to the succession to the throne, the king should be chosen from the female line,

* Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 4. Bede adds, "This monastery is to this day possessed by English inhabitants; being the same that, grown up from a small beginning to be very large, is generally called Mageo; and as all things have been long since brought under a better method, (the Irish had then accepted the Roman computation of Easter) it contains an exemplary society of monks, who are gathered there from the province of the English, and live by the labour of their hands, after the example of the venerable fathers, under a rule and a canonical abbot, in much continency and singleness of life."

* Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 26.

rather than from the male, "which custom," Bede says, "has been observed among the Picts to this day." In process of time, some of the Scots migrated from Ireland under a leader named Reuda, and made a settlement among the Picts, which they still hold: "from the name of their chief they are called Dalreudins, for in their language *daal* signifies a part."

This curious glimpse of the ethnological notions of the time of Bede may be compared with the fuller legends of the Irish as related in the preceding pages.

Bede adds that, "Ireland, for wholesomeness and serenity of climate, far surpasses Britain; for the snow scarcely ever lies there above three days; no man makes hay in the summer for winter's provision, or builds stables for his beasts of burden. No reptiles are found there, and no snake can live there; for though often carried thither out of Britain, as soon as the ship comes near the shore, and the scent of the air reaches them, they die. On the other hand, almost all things in the island are good against poison. In short, we have known that, when some persons have been bitten by serpents, the scrapings of leaves of books that were brought out of Ireland, being put into water, and given them to drink, have immediately expelled the spreading poison, and assuaged the swelling. The island abounds in milk and honey, nor is there any want of vines, fish, or fowl; and it is remarkable for the abundance of deer and goats."*

The information gained from the Anglo-Saxon historian, as we have just seen, goes far to overthrow a large portion of the early Irish ecclesiastical history, as we receive it from the native historians. The notices of civil history found in Bede are too few and too vague to enable us even to attempt to use them in checking the records of the Irish annalists, and it would be in vain to attempt to reconcile them.

A long series of princes are represented as reigning during the seventh and eighth centuries, whose actions have seldom gained them more than a nominal place in history. Most of them, however, had their "celebrated" battle or battles, and we now find the monks not unfrequently taking a part in these intestine wars, and they often suffered from the vengeance of the conquerors. We are told that under king Cionnfaola, the son of Blathmac, who ascended the throne in

674, Ireland was invaded by foreigners, who drove away the monks of Beannchuir, and burnt their monastery. After a reign of four years, this prince was slain, and succeeded by Fionnachta, who is called Fionnachta Fleadhach (or Fionnachta the Feaster), because under him the people of Ireland were accustomed to make great feasts, and recreated themselves with noble and expensive entertainments. King Fionnachta was engaged in war with the people of Leinster, probably on account of the old subject of dispute, the tribute. It is said to have been in his reign (in 684) that Egfrid king of Northumbria invaded Ireland, and the Irish writers tell us that the strangers defeated the Irish and Picts in a great battle at Rathmore, after which they returned home with a rich booty. Some of the annalists add that, through the intercession of Adamnan, the plunder and the captives were sent back to Ireland, and the Irish and Northumbrians were reconciled. Egfrid was succeeded on the throne by his brother Alfrid, who had been sheltered and educated in the Irish monasteries, and who retained an affectionate regard for his foster country. In 685, we are told, Loingseach ascended the throne of Ireland, under whom the island was invaded and ravaged by the Welsh. The next king, Congal, is chiefly remarkable for having persecuted the clergy of Kildare. In the reign of his successor, Feargall, the Welsh again invaded Ireland, and were defeated by the Dalriadians in the battle of Cloch-Mionuire. This reign is said to have been remarkable for three extraordinary showers which fell from heaven on the same day at three different places—it rained honey at Foithin-Beag, money at Foithin-More, and blood at Magh-Laighion! Feargall was defeated and slain by the king of Leinster, in the great battle of Almhain. The next two kings were both killed in battle, and it is recorded of their successor, Flaithbhearbaeh, as a very remarkable circumstance, that he died a natural death. The reign of Daniel, who came to the throne towards the middle of the eighth century, and is said to have ruled over Ireland more than forty years, presents another long scene of turbulence and bloodshed. During that of his successor, Nial Freasach, the annalists speak of several shocks of earthquakes, and of a famine which depopulated the island. It is not to be wondered at if, thus weakened by intestine dissensions and afflictions of every kind,

* Bede, Hist. Eccl. i. 1.

the Irish became an easy prey to foreign invaders.

Neither are we much surprised that so many of the pious and learned monks, who now certainly came from the Irish abbeys, were disgusted with the turbulence of their countrymen, and sought distinction in other countries. It is certain that, from the beginning of the eighth century, the empire of the Franks was filled with Irish ecclesiastics. Among the most remarkable of these early exiles from their native land was St. Kilian, to whom the people of Franconia owed their conversion. Many of these voluntary exiles had received their instruction in a celebrated school at Lismore, and the opinions which we sometimes find broached by these men after they had settled in Gaul give us a high opinion of the learning of the Irish schools of that time. Thus the abbot Virgilius, who had left Ireland about the year 746, and had risen high in the favour of Pepin, sustained against the Anglo-Saxon Boniface that there were antipodes, or men on the other side of the world, which he believed to be spherical, a doctrine so bold that it even gave umbrage to the Pope. The court of Charlemagne was crowded with Irish scholars, and a story told by a foreign chronicler of good authority, of the arrival of two distinguished Irishmen in France during the reign of that monarch, is peculiarly characteristic. The names of these two scholars were Clement and Albinus, and they arrived on the coast of France in company with a party of merchants. When they landed they saw crowds of Franks eagerly pressing round the merchants, as each proclaimed or exhibited his wares; and immediately, to draw attention to themselves, Clement and Albinus followed the example, and began to cry aloud, "Who wants wisdom? Who wants wisdom? Let him come to us, for we have it to sell!" By continually repeating this cry, they soon attracted attention and became an object of curiosity, and an account of their behaviour having been given to Charlemagne, he sent for them to his court, was pleased with their manners and attainments, and placed Clement over a school he had established in France, while he sent Albinus to preside over a similar institution at Pavia. I will not attempt to enumerate the other learned Irishmen who flourished in France during the latter part of the

eighth century and the beginning of the ninth, at which latter period Eric bishop of Auxerre, in a panegyric letter to the emperor Charles the Bold, speaks of Ireland as "despising the dangers of the sea, to migrate, with almost her whole troop of philosophers, to our coasts."

Amid the somewhat confused annals of the period just described, we seem to trace the outlines of political revolutions of a more important character, caused partly by the struggles of the different provincial rulers for the mastery over the others, and partly by the increasing power of the church. The tax which had been so long and reluctantly paid by the people of Leinster, had been abolished in the latter part of the seventh century through the intercession of St. Moling, who is said to have employed a pious equivocation to obtain his object; and the curse of the church was pronounced against all who should attempt to undo what St. Moling had done. Yet within half a century the claim was revived by king Fergall, who invaded Leinster with a powerful army in 722 to enforce the payment of the obnoxious tribute. The people of Leinster, under their king, resisted the attack, and in a desperate battle fought at Almhain, a place celebrated in Irish romantic history, the invaders were defeated with great loss, and king Fergall himself was among the slain. One of the chroniclers who record this event, Tigernach, states that two hundred "kings" perished in this battle, from which we must suppose that all the chieftains of any power now assumed that title in their turbulent pride. The ecclesiastical historians, however, claim the entire credit of this victory, which, according to them, was granted to show that what had been established by the influence of the church was not to be violated by the usurpations of the temporal power. They say that, at the commencement of the battle, a holy hermit, whom they believed to be the spirit of St. Moling, stood forward in the foremost rank of the army of Leinster, and in a voice of thunder declared the dissatisfaction of heaven at the impiety of Fergall and his people, who had broken the engagement so solemnly entered into by his predecessor, and that Fergall's army, paralysed with terror, immediately took flight, and were slaughtered almost unresisting.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST INVASIONS OF IRELAND BY THE NORTHMEN.



N reviewing thus rapidly the uncertain annals of the earlier ages of Irish history, we obtain an indistinct view of certain great social revolutions which had passed over that island. Inhabited first, probably, by a Celtic population, whose chief seats had been in the south and south-east, its northern shores had at a much later period received a new race from the north of Europe—perhaps from the shores of the Baltic—which had gradually become powerful, and usurped the sovereignty over the Celtic race. It was in Ulster—the head seat of this northern or Scottish race—that the northern spirit of civilization developed itself most. The great social movements seem to have generally originated in Ulster, and there, according to the traditions of the Irish church, Christianity first took root in Ireland. The kings of Ulster seldom remained quiet when any of the other subordinate princes raised the standard of revolt against the superior sovereign, and it was in this constant struggle for the supreme power which, during the period included in the preceding chapter, seems to have been gaining in intensity, that the national strength of the island declined, until the subordinate kings of what Irish historians have termed the pentarchy, were no longer able to assert their authority over their own nobles, who seem, by the statement of the number of kings slain at the battle of Almhain, to have begun to arrogate to themselves the title of sovereigns. This was the moment at which a new race of invaders, more ruthless than any former persecutors of the population of Ireland, suddenly made its appearance on her shores.

In the decline of the Roman empire, the regions of the north and east had poured down their successive tribes to ravage and afterwards settle in the imperial provinces, until the tide of emigration was arrested by the establishment of the various kingdoms of mediæval Europe. The Franks and the Lombards had turned round and repressed the onward movement, of which they had

led the way, and the nations which had followed in the van, deprived of space to spread themselves over the Continent, were crowded round the northern and less productive shores of the Baltic, and, checked in their progress by land, threw themselves upon the ocean, and formed that extraordinary race of sea-rovers or Wicings, who infested the islands and coasts of the west with their piratical ravages. These, to whom different authors apply the terms of Ostmen, and Northmen, but who are more popularly known by the general name of Danes, first made themselves dreaded in the British isles in the latter half of the eighth century.

Our own chroniclers inform us that in the year 787 the shores of Britain were first visited by the Danish pirates, who came in three ships, with the object, according to William of Malmesbury, of ascertaining the fruitfulness of the soil, and trying the courage of its inhabitants. The reeve, or steward, of a village near the coast where they landed, would have captured these unceremonious visitors, but he was slain in the attempt; though it is probable that they met with a warmer reception than they expected, for they returned home, and six years passed before their countrymen again visited the British isles. Terrible convulsions of nature are then said to have been the precursors of their ravages; for the Saxon chronicle tells us, under the year 793,—"This year dire forewarnings came over the land of the Northumbrians, and miserably terrified the people; these were excessive whirlwinds and lightnings; and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. A great famine soon followed these tokens; and a little after that, in the same year, on the 6th before the ides of January, the ravaging of heathenmen lamentably destroyed God's church at Lindisfarne through rapine and slaughter." On this occasion the Danes remained a year, desolating the coasts of Northumberland, before they departed. When they left Northumberland, either these or another party proceeded to Ireland, and, in 795, laid waste the little island of Rechran,

or Rathlin, on the northernmost coast of Antrim.*

Nial Frassach, or Nial of the Showers, so named from the circumstance of his having been born in the year of the three extraordinary showers mentioned in the last chapter, had died after a reign of four years, and been succeeded, after a short usurpation by a king of another family, by his son Aodh, who was reigning when the Danes began their more serious ravages in Ireland. They had already twice visited Iona, burnt and plundered its monastery, and slaughtered its monks, when they came, it is said, with fifty ships to the coast of Connaught, and carried desolation into the heart of the present county of Rosecommon. At first, the Irish were panic-struck with this unexpected visitation; but they soon resumed their courage, and the old annalists enumerate many battles during the few following years, in which they took a severe vengeance on their persecutors. In 810, the Danes were signally defeated by the men of Ulster. In 811, they were vanquished by the people of Thomond, whose leader is named "king of the lake of Killarney." In 812, in another attempt upon Munster, the Danes were discomfited with so much slaughter that they are said to have returned home in despair; and the fame of this defeat reached even France and Germany. For two or three years after this event, Ireland is said to have been freed from the ravages of the northern pirates. In the course of this invasion, the monastic establishments at Inis-Labhraise and Dairinis were plundered and burnt.

The Irish monarch Aodh was killed in battle, not with the Danes, but with a domestic enemy, for the island was during his whole reign torn by civil discord. The increasing power of the kings of Munster had for some years been weakening the monarchy, which was now frequently braved by the lesser subordinate sovereigns, whom it resisted with more or less success, according to the energy and skill of the reigning

sovereign. Irritated against the people of Leinster, for some cause or other, king Aodh suddenly invaded that province with a powerful army, and ravaged and burnt with greater barbarity than even the pagan Danes, until it was reduced to such a condition that it willingly submitted to be divided between two chiefs of his own appointing. Even the church, which was the peculiar object of the rage of the foreign invaders, could stand upon its privileges to assert them against their own monarch; and we learn that in 806, some of the royal princes having trespassed against the free territory of the monastery of Tallagh (in the county of Dublin), the monks seized upon the chariot horses of the monarch of Ireland, and by retaining them in their custody, interrupted the celebration of the Tailtean games, one of the greatest insults that could have been offered to the crown. The king was obliged to make ample reparation to the monks before his chariots were restored. To add to the calamities of foreign invasion and domestic wars, the chroniclers have recorded that the island was visited with such terrible storms of thunder, that above a thousand persons are said to have been destroyed at once "between Corcabaiginn and the sea-side;" and at the same time the sea broke through its banks, and overflowed a tract of land which could never afterwards be recovered, and it is added that the fury of the tempest and the violence of the current of water were so great, that the island called Inis-Fidha was forced asunder and divided into three. The reign of Concobar, who succeeded Aodh on the throne, opened with the restoration to a certain degree of domestic tranquillity, although he found himself at first engaged in active war with the provincial chiefs, especially with those of Ulster. The Nials or O'Niells, of the north, who had always been at enmity with the southern branch of the family of the great Nial, marched at the head of a large army against the Nials of the south, who were led to battle by the monarch Concobar. But when the two armies faced each other on the plain near the Hill of the Horse, both parties were seized with a sudden feeling of compunction, inspired, the chroniclers tell us, by a miracle of God, and the two armies turned away and marched to their respective homes in peace.

This peace, however, was soon disturbed by new and still more terrible invasions of the

* We are accustomed to give the name of Danes to the whole race of invaders from the north who ravaged our shores from the eighth to the eleventh centuries, and it will be more convenient to retain the popular appellation. The Frankish chroniclers generally termed them Northmen or Normans. Tigernach, the oldest Irish chronicler, gives them invariably the Irish name of Gall, or strangers: the subsequent historians call them sometimes simply the Pagans, and at others Lochlannaigh, or dwellers on the lake or sea.

Danish marauders, who in the latter part of Aodh's reign had arrived with a larger fleet and landed on the coast of Munster, where they plundered the country with their usual barbarity, whilst another fleet of the sea-kings made a descent on the eastern side of the island. The churches and monasteries, not only because they were Christian establishments, but as being the most prominent objects and those which offered the richest prospect of plunder, were the first to experience their vengeance. The noble abbey of Banchor was burnt to the ground, after the Danes had plundered it of everything valuable and butchered its venerable abbot with no less, it is said, than nine hundred of its monks; and having broken open the rich shrine of its founder, St. Comgall, they shewed their contempt for the sacred character of the place by scornfully scattering about the relics which had been preserved in it. This sacrilegious act is more bitterly lamented by the ancient annalists than the deeds of blood and desolation which laid waste the country. While scenes like these were presented in the south and east, fresh ships landed new invaders on another part of the coast, who made their way into Ossory, spoiling and burning on their road. But the people of Ossory suddenly rose, and falling upon them while they were collecting their plunder, slew a great part of them, and forced the others to leave their prey behind them. The Danes who escaped the slaughter on this occasion were soon joined by others of their countrymen, who threw themselves into other districts, plundered Lismore and other places, and burnt a great number of churches and monastic establishments. A new army of Danes at the same time landed at Limerick. To follow them in their progress would only be to give a monotonous relation of the same scenes of bloodshed and burning.

The swarms of invaders thus poured from the insatiate north upon the shores of Ireland drove the inhabitants almost to despair, and their courage was not raised by the reproaches of the clergy, that they had drawn upon themselves these calamities by their own profligacy, for they said, as the Saxon and Frankish clergy said under similar circumstances, that a torrent of vice and profaneness had overspread the nation, shown especially in the disregard for the church, and that this prevailed chiefly among the princes and nobles, whose ambition, pride, and oppressive injustice had risen to so great

a height, that the cruel Danes were used as instruments of Divine vengeance, to scourge and correct a wicked and debauched nobility and an immoral and licentious populace.

Hitherto the various bands of Danes who were occupied in devastating the different districts of the island appear to have acted without concert, and to have had no other object than to harass the country and collect the greatest possible amount of plunder. Even the names of their leaders have not been handed down to posterity, and they made no local settlements beyond the temporary encampments which they occupied while employed in ravaging the country around. But in the midst of the universal devastation committed by these hordes of barbarians during the reign of king Conobar, a chieftain renowned for superiority of rank or daring, whose name, which is not mentioned in the Danish annals, though it soon became too celebrated in Irish history, was Turgesius, arrived with a strong body of adventurers on the northern coast. Some of the early writers state that Turgesius was the brother or son of the king of Denmark, but be this as it may, it is certain that as soon as his arrival in Ireland was known, all the Danes who had preceded him at once acknowledged his authority, and from this moment they acted with greater unity in their operations, and showed a more decided intention of subjugating and occupying the land. Within a short period Turgesius had made himself master of nearly the whole of the Leath-Cuinn, or northern half of the island; and so fearful were the ravages committed by his followers, that Armagh is said to have been thrice plundered in the space of a month, and its abbot carried away into captivity. Kildare, also, was repeatedly visited by these invaders, and among the innumerable sacred spots on which they wreaked their vengeance most cruelly, the old chroniclers enumerate the monastery of the Anglo-Saxons founded by Colman at Mayo; the island of Inis-cathy, at the mouth of the Shannon; the cells of St. Kevin, in the valley of Glendalough; the church of Slane, built on the spot where St. Patrick was reported to have lit the paschal fire when on his way to Tara; and the Scelig isles, on the coast of Kerry. When the Danes set fire to Moigh-Bille, they forced the holy hermits within the walls, and burnt them along with their house.

The Irish still opposed their invaders, but with varied success. The men of Ulster,

under Lethlobar, king of Dalaradia, gained a signal victory over the Danes in 826; and Cairbre, king of Hy-Kinsellagh, defeated them in a decisive battle in the following year. But a sanguinary battle at Druim-Conla, in which the people of Leinster were entirely defeated by the Danes, and lost one of their bravest chieftains with a large portion of his army, placed that province at their mercy.

While the Danes were thus reducing under their rule the northern parts of the island, and laying waste many of the fairest provinces of the south, the great Irish chiefs were still occupied with their own ambitious designs, as though no foreign enemies had been preying upon their country. The crown of Munster had descended to one of the most celebrated of the old Irish kings, Feidlim-mac-Criomthan, who, presuming on the height to which the power of the southern province had already been carried, aimed at nothing less than the monarchy of Ireland. Instead of resisting the progress of the Danes in the north, he joined in the invasion, and imitated them in their ravages, sparing neither clergy nor laity. Invading Leinster, he seized and laid desolate the monastery of Clonmacnois (now known to the traveller in search of the picturesque as the Seven Churches), which had been visited by the Danes no long period before; and when the foreigners attacked Kildare, they found that it had already been plundered by Feidlim, who had carried the clergy into captivity along with his slaves. Concobar, the Irish monarch, died in 832 or 833, of grief, as it is said, at the miseries of the land over which he had been called to rule, and was succeeded by Nial Cailne, the son of the former king Aodh, who added to the general confusion by invading the province of Ulster, to place a prince named Brian on the throne. He had, however, to sustain a bitter contest with king Feidlim, who revived the ancient feud between the provinces of Munster and Connaught, which arose from their several claims to the district now known as the county of Clare. Feidlim invaded on several occasions the province of Connaught, and in 839 he gained so decisive a victory over the army of Nial, that the latter was compelled to meet him soon after at Clonmacnois, and there deliver hostages for his future dependence on the monarch of Munster, whose forces had, the same day in which he gained the victory in Connaught, marched in triumph through Meath, and

established themselves in the neighbourhood of Tara. Feidlim was, from this moment, acknowledged to be virtually king over all Ireland, but he did not long enjoy his triumph; for, after many acts of turbulence, he at length received a wound from the staff of the abbot of St. Ciaran, whose lands he was devastating, of which he was never cured, but after languishing some months, and, as some say, devoting the close of his days to strict penitence, he died in the year 846. Others say that, not content with the civil government of his kingdom, he had entered into holy orders, and assumed the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Leath-Mogha, or southern half of the island. The ecclesiastical annalists, forgetting all the enormities which stained his reign of seven and twenty years, speak of him in laudatory terms, and an early writer, quoted by Keating, enters the death of one of the most sanguinary of the Irish monarchs as that of "a most excellent and wise anchoret,"* alluding no doubt by this term to the penitential retirement in which he ended his days.

During the latter part of Feidlim's reign, the Danish force in Ireland had been continually increased by fresh arrivals from the north, and the sword and the torch had never ceased to devastate the island, which was gradually becoming feebler and feebler in its resistance. The kingdom of Munster had been reduced to such a state of confusion in Feidlim's latter days, that an ecclesiastic, Olchobhair abbot of Imly, seized upon the crown. Nial Cailne now recovered his sovereignty, and made a desperate effort to save his kingdom from its relentless invaders. The latter having reduced the whole of Leinster, and established their headquarters at Dublin, had taken up positions on the borders of Connaught, from which they were harassing the country around, when Nial suddenly raised an army and marched against them; and in a decisive and obstinately disputed battle he defeated them with great slaughter, and forced them to retire back upon Leinster. Connaught was thus for a moment relieved from the ravages of the barbarians; but its king perished in the prime of his life, before he could derive any substantial benefit of his victory. As he stood by the river Cailne seeking for a ford where he might pass without danger, one of his favourites, trying the depth on horseback, was carried away by the stream;

* Optimus et sapiens anachorita Scotorum quievit.

on which the king approaching too near the bank to urge his men to save him, fell in himself, and was drowned. From this circumstance this monarch was ever afterwards called, from the name of the river, Nial Cailne.

Another prince of the race of Nial was not allowed to ascend his throne, for the power of the Danes had arisen to such a height, that their leader, Turgesius, assumed himself the sovereignty of Ireland, and no one of Irish blood was left strong enough to offer successful resistance to his yoke, to which they were it appears the more easily reconciled, because the prophecies of their own bards had, as we are told, taught them to believe that it was a destiny which they could not escape.* The old annalists give sickening details of the degradation and oppression to which the Irish were subjected under their Danish tyrants, who perpetually goaded them into insurrection in order that they might have an excuse for slaughtering and plundering them, and who, when they submitted quietly, are represented as sparing no indignity with which revenge or lust could prompt them to outrage their nationality or the common feelings of humanity.

The sufferings of the Irish under Danish rule were of long duration, for it was not, according to some of the chroniclers, till thirty years after his arrival in the island, that they were relieved from the tyranny of Turgesius by his death. The circumstances of this event, according to the story current among the Irish in the twelfth century, are told by Giraldus Cambrensis—they are not found in the purely Irish annalists now extant.

It appears, that among other acts of oppression, the Danes had not been in the habit of sparing the wives and daughters of their Irish subjects, and one day Turgesius cast longing eyes on the beautiful daughter of O'Melachlin, king of Meath. The king of Meath knew that he was without power to resist the will of the tyrant, but meditating revenge, he not only consented to deliver up his own daughter, but he promised to

send with her fifteen of the most beautiful damsels in his province. Turgesius chose the same number of his Danish chieftains, and they retired to one of his private residences in a little island in Loch-Var. When the feast was over, and the Danes proceeded to familiarities with their guests, they found that the fifteen attendants on the princess were so many beardless youths dressed like females, each of whom had a sharp dagger concealed under his garment, which he plunged into the breast of his assailant. The guards were soon massacred, and intelligence of the death of Turgesius being quickly spread abroad, the Irish rose from one end of the island to the other, and slaughtered their oppressors. The few Danes who escaped their vengeance, are said to have taken refuge in their ships, and returned to their home in the north.

This massacre, which bears a close resemblance to the slaughter of the Danes throughout England at a period somewhat later, was no doubt the result of a conspiracy of which the king of Meath was the head. Giraldus has preserved another Irish tradition of his time, according to which O'Melachlin, when on one occasion admitted to the presence of Turgesius, had put to him an insidious question, "A multitude of destructive birds have come to settle in the kingdom and destroy its produce, what will be the most effective method of ridding the land of this plague?" The Dane replied, "Kill the birds, and destroy their nests." The Irish paid strict attention to the words of their oppressor, and as soon as they had effected the slaughter of the Danes throughout the island, they destroyed the castles which they had erected as the most effectual method of keeping them in subjection.* According to the Irish authorities, Turgesius was not included in the massacre in his palace, but having been delivered bound into the hands of the king of Meath, the latter ordered him to be thrown into Loch-Var. O'Melachlin was immediately chosen monarch of Ireland. These events are said to have occurred in the year 844.

The desire of revenge, or the reputed fertility and richness of the island, soon brought new swarms of Northmen to the Irish shores, where a hundred and forty sail of Danish ships arrived in 849. But from this time, the war assumed a new character:

* Keating cites the words of one of these bardic prophecies, which his translator O'Connor gives in English as follows:—

"The bold Norwegians, with a numerous sail,
Shall try the Irish ocean, and arrive
Upon the coasts. The isle shall be enslaved
By these victorious foreigners, who shall place
In every church an abbot of their own,
And shall proclaim, to fill the throne of Ireland,
A king of the Norwegian race."

* This account of the death of Turgesius is taken from Giraldus Cambrensis, Topogr. Hibern. Distinct. iii. cc. 40—42.

for it appears that no sooner had the Irish freed themselves for a moment from their foreign enemies, than they began to make war among themselves, and O'Melachlin was obliged to call the Danes to his assistance as the only means of asserting his own authority. The latter now found it more profitable to serve as mercenaries than to act as mere plundering marauders; and in the continual feuds between the native chiefs they fought sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, and not unfrequently on both. One of the princes of Meath, named Keneth, with the assistance of an army of Danes, made war on the princes of the family of Nial in Connaught, and plundered and laid waste their territories in a ruthless manner.

In the midst of these events a new race of invaders suddenly made their appearance, the history of whom is not very clear, though it is pretended that the former ravagers were Norwegians, while the new comers were strictly speaking Danes. The Irish themselves distinguished them by calling the former, from their complexion, *Fin-Gals*, or *White Strangers*, and the latter (their new visitors) *Dubh-Gals*, or *Black Strangers*. This new invasion occurred in the year 850, at which time the *Fin-Gals* held possession of Dublin and a large tract of territory to the north and south, a portion of which is said to have taken from them its name of *Fingal*. The *Dubh-Gals* proceeded to the eastern coasts, and, instead of spreading desolation among the Irish, they attacked the *Fin-Gals*, and made themselves masters of Dublin. But the *Fin-Gals*, who appear to have been taken by surprise, collected their strength early in the following year, and after fighting desperately, according to the old chroniclers, during three days and three nights, they recovered possession of Dublin, and drove the new invaders into their ships.

Two years after this, in 853, a new body of Danes arrived, under the command of three brothers, *Anlaf*, *Sitric*, and *Ivar*, said to have been of the royal blood of Norway. These invaders were called *Ostmen* or *Eastmen*, though there appears no necessity to distinguish them by name from the other Danish settlers. Giraldus Cambrensis, who had an opportunity of collecting the *Dano-Irish* traditions at an early period, informs us that the three brothers came as merchants, that they seized upon three important mercantile positions, *Dublin*, *Limerick*, and *Waterford*, and that the Irish, unaccustomed

themselves to commercial transactions, were easily persuaded to allow them to establish themselves in peace, in the expectation of the great profits they were likely to derive from their trade. The Irish seem to have had no towns of any importance before the arrival of the Danes. *Sitric* built the city of *Waterford*; and *Anlaf* and *Ivar* probably raised two places that were little better than hamlets into large fortified towns. Giraldus makes the three brothers the respective founders of all these cities. The three Danish mercantile principalities thus established, rose rapidly to wealth and power, and, though for a time their relations with the Irish were of a peaceful character, they soon laid claim to the supremacy which had been enjoyed by the Danes in former years, and this claim led to frequent hostilities. But the Irish found that the numerous fortified towns, with which the terrible merchants had now fortified their possessions, were more effective instruments of coercion than soldiers in the field, and they are represented as being at length constrained to submit to an old tribute established by *Turgesius*—the *Dane-geld* of Ireland—but which received the name of *Argiod-sron*, or *Nose-money*, because the refusal or inability to pay it was punished by the amputation of the nose.

The Danes who had previously established themselves in the northern part of the island appear not to have joined with their mercantile kinsmen, but they continued to serve as mercenaries in the Irish intestine wars under their adventurous leader *Anlaf*, or to follow him in his plundering excursions into Scotland. During the reign of O'Melachlin, the race of *Nial*—now known as the *Hy-Niels* or *O'Neils*—began to regain their influence in the two branches of this great family, the *O'Neils* of *Ulster*, or the northern *O'Neils*, and the southern *O'Neils* of *Connaught*, in whom was the direct regal line of Ireland. It was probably the struggles of this family against O'Melachlin for the monarchy, that led first to the calling in of the Danes as auxiliaries. *Anlaf* the Dane and his followers joined the party of the *O'Neils* of the north, who, with their assistance, overrun and harassed Meath, which, after the election of O'Melachlin to the sovereignty of Ireland, had been held in partition by two princes, named *Lorcan* and *Concobar*, and, among other exploits, they plundered and burnt the then rich city of *Armagh*. In a subsequent expedition with the Danes into

Scotland, Anlaf was defeated and slain. But by his assistance the O'Neils of the north had become so powerful, that on the death of O'Melachlin, who had the happiness to die a natural death in 863, their chief, Aodh Finliath, assumed the crown of Ireland. He immediately seized upon one of his old enemies, Lorcan, prince of Meath, and put out his eyes; while his Danish confederate, Anlaf, captured the other, Concobar, and drowned him at Clonard. After a reign of sixteen years, Aodh Finliath was also permitted to die in peace, and was succeeded on the throne of Ireland by Flann-Siona, a prince of the family of his predecessor. One of his first acts was an invasion of the kingdom of Munster, provoked by circumstances with which we are not well acquainted, but disastrous to the invaded country, from which Flann Siona carried rich booty and numerous captives.

The kings of Munster, as the head of the Leath-Mogha or southern half, were again aspiring to superiority over the northern division of the island, or the Leath-Cuinn, which had now for some time given monarchs to Ireland, and the rivalry soon exhibited itself in scenes of turbulence and bloodshed. About the year 901, Cormac-mac-Cuilenan, a prince of the royal line, distinguished by his gentle character, and his love of learning, who, partly for these qualities, had been promoted to the bishopric of Cashel, (the ecclesiastical as well as royal metropolis of the south), was called to the throne of Munster. The monastic historians represent the reign of this king as one of tranquillity and happiness for the south of Ireland, and they describe him as occupied chiefly in rebuilding and restoring churches and monasteries, and repairing the damages inflicted on his kingdom by the inroads of the Danes. But the efforts of their pious partiality fail in concealing the turbulence with which their favourite monarch had to contend, and the acts of violence and injustice into which he was led, by the headstrong folly of his councillors, of whom the most influential, and at the same time the most pernicious, was a warlike abbot of Iniscathy, named Flaherty.

The two most celebrated clans in Munster, both distinguished for their attachment to the throne, were the Eoganacht or Eugenians, who inhabited the territory about Cashel, and the Dalcassians, who, from their position on the borders of Connaught, were considered as the first and bravest champions

of the kingdom. Soon after the accession of Cormac to the throne, an event occurred which showed the disaffection of the Eugenians to this monarch.* The king, we are told, proposed to celebrate the festival of Easter with greater state and magnificence than usual in his palace at Cashel, and a short time before the day arrived, the king sent round to the tribe of the Eugenians to claim their usual service on such occasions of furnishing the provisions for the royal table during his stay in his capital. The Eugenians refused with rudeness to perform the service required from them, and the king was obliged to rely for the support of his household on the more faithful Dalcassians, who voluntarily came forward to supply him in his distress. The king was highly displeased with the disobedience of the Eugenians, and, resolving to put them to another trial, he claimed their assistance in furnishing his court with some of their best arms and horses, and the demand was accompanied with a gentle rebuke for their previous want of respect for the throne. The Eugenians, on this occasion, did not absolutely refuse to answer their monarch's demand, but they gave a new proof of their disaffection in gathering together all their old battered arms and their worst horses, and sending them to the court of king Cormac at Cashel. The Dalcassians, informed of this insolent behaviour, again came forward to the aid of the crown, and made a voluntary offering of a number of their choicest horses, fully equipped, and not only sent their best arms, but added to them a present of valuable jewels. The king is said to have been so touched with this generous mark of devotion, that he not only expressed his preference for the Dalcassians in open court, but he committed his gratitude to metre, for, among his other princely qualities, the Irish annalists add that of being an accomplished poet.

The invasion of Munster by Flann-Siona, mentioned above, occurred in the year 906. The year following, king Cormac, urged on by the warlike abbot of Iniscathy, raised a powerful army, and marched against the monarch of Ireland, whom he defeated in a decisive battle on the heath of Moylena, and king Flann was compelled to give hostages as sureties for his submission. Cormac next marched into the district of

* This event is here related from the pages of Keating.

Roscommon, and compelled the other princes of the family of the O'Neils to give similar pledges of their subjection to his superior authority. Cormac now became virtually sovereign over Ireland, without absolutely depriving the O'Neils of the sceptre. But his turbulent and ambitious ecclesiastics, who had exchanged the simplicity of the Gospel for the love of the sword, would not leave him quiet in the glory which he had thus earned. They represented to him that as the head of the Leath-Mogha, he had a right to claim from the people of Leinster a contribution towards the expenses of his government and wars, and they urged him to put forward this claim without delay, and to prosecute it with the sword. Cormac reluctantly yielded to their advice, and raising an army, marched to the borders of Leinster, where he received a peaceful message from the king of that province, that the question might be decided rather by negotiation than by arms. The rash councils of the impetuous abbot Flaherty determined the king of Munster to proceed to extremities.

The monarch of Ireland, Flann-Siona, who only waited for an occasion to wipe off the disgrace of his defeat at Moylena, took part with the people of Leinster: joining his forces with those of their king, and supported by most of the princes of the Leath-Cuinn, he marched with a numerous army to the plain of Magh-Ailbhe, where the monarchy of Ireland was now to be decided. The soldiers of Munster are said to have been discouraged by several ill omens, and by the known despondency of their king, who, forewarned of his death, had made his will before the battle, leaving valuable gifts to his chief religious houses and appointing his successor from the Dalcassian tribe in preference to his own ungrateful clan, the Eugenians; a few had deserted before the engagement, and the rest, after a short contest, turned and fled, and were pursued with great slaughter by the united armies of king Flann and the king of Leinster. Cormac perished in the battle or in the pursuit, and the abbot of Iniscathy was subsequently captured, and placed in close confinement. This battle took place in the year 908. After a long, and in general a successful reign, Flann-Siona died in 916, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Nial Glundubh.

In the national importance of these transactions, the Danes seem almost to have been forgotten by the native annalists. Their

strength had evidently been much diminished by the increasing power of Munster as well as by that of the O'Neils, and they appear to have confined themselves to their commercial transactions in their strongholds of Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and Limerick. Their union under one king, who established his head seat at Dublin, gave more stability to the character of their settlement. In 902, the Danes had been expelled from Dublin by the people of Leinster; but in a very few years they recovered their capital, and regained their former power, and we find Danish fleets proceeding along the southern coast of the island and taking hostages from the princes whose territories bordered on the sea. Nial, or Neil Glundubh, was himself slain in a sanguinary battle against the Danes in 920. It is recorded of him, as a proof of his power and of the glory of his reign, that he revived the ancient Tailtean games, which had been discontinued amid the confusion attendant on the Danish invasions. It had been the established rule of succession to the monarchy, that the crown should be worn alternately by the representatives of the two great branches of the family of the Nials, of the north and the south. On the death of Nial Glundubh, he was succeeded by Donough, a prince of the other branch of the O'Neils, while his son Murkertach became "roydamna," or heir apparent of the throne. The latter soon made himself one of the most renowned princes in the annals of his age and country. The reign of Donough, which extended through a quarter of a century, was one of continued troubles and wars, chiefly owing to the increased force of the Danes.

Soon after he ascended the throne, the crown of Munster was disputed by two claimants, Callachan, of the tribe of the Eugenians, and Kennedy, of the Dalcassian clan, but the latter, who was the father of the celebrated Brian Boru, yielded at length to the superior rights of his rival. The character of Callachan is differently represented by the chroniclers, whose prejudices lay on the side of the kings of Munster, and by those whose position in the north made them in this case more impartial. The former give romantic details of the exploits of the king of Munster against the Danes; while the others represent him as the frequent ally of the foreigners, and as imitating them in treachery and excesses. Like them he pillaged the property of the church, not sparing even the persons of the ecclesiastics.

In 941, he defeated the people of the Desies with great slaughter, and ravaged their territory, until they recovered courage, and inflicted upon him so signal a defeat, that he fled precipitately from their borders. Two years before he had joined with the Danes of Waterford in invading Meath, and carried off as captives the abbots of Clonenagh and Cillachie.

Murkertach, meanwhile, had pursued a nobler career. In 926, he had defeated the Danes in a great battle in Ulster, killing eighty of their chieftains, among whom was a son of Godfrey, king of Dublin. In 931, he was obliged to make head against them in a new invasion of Ulster, and again gained a signal victory. Five years later, in 936, we find him carrying his victorious arms to the very walls of Dublin. In spite, however, of these successes, Ireland was, during this period, cruelly ravaged by the foreigners, and many of its most revered shrines were again laid desolate. But the persevering bravery of Murkertach was finally successful in restraining the marauders within their narrow territory on the east and south-east, and then he made a triumphant progress through a great portion of the island, collecting tribute and hostages from the subordinate chiefs who had been reduced by the force of his arms, or by the reports of his prowess. From the Danes of Dublin he received as a hostage their prince Sitric, while from the Irish of Leinster, who had latterly distinguished themselves as the allies of the Danes, he carried away their king Lorcan. He entered next the kingdom of Munster, and compelled the men of Cashel to deliver up to him their turbulent king, Callachan, whom he carried away into bondage, and kept him for some time a close prisoner.

Murkertach did not live to ascend the throne. Soon after the completion of his triumphal progress through the kingdom, he was again called into the field to oppose the restless Danes, and in 943 he was slain in a fierce battle in which the invaders obtained the victory. His fate was long a subject of bitter lamentation among the bards of his country. Callachan, king of Munster, appears to have followed his old course of turbulence and crime after his release from captivity, and we find him in 944, the year after Murkertach's death, gaining a sanguinary victory over his old rival Kenedy. The same year died Donough, king of Ireland; he was succeeded by a prince named Congelach, who had prevailed with the peo-

ple of Leinster to join him against the Danes soon after his accession to the throne.

The reign of Donough has obtained celebrity in English history by the part which the Danes of Ireland and their Irish allies took in the invasion of this island. Athelstan had, in 925, ascended the throne of the great Alfred, and within the space of a few years his rule extended unopposed through the whole extent of Saxon England, and he had thus become an unwelcome neighbour to the Scots of the north. Anlaf, king of Dublin, the son of Guthfrith, and one of the bravest of the Danish chiefs, had married the daughter of Constantine, king of Scotland, and was encouraged by his father-in-law to attempt to possess himself of the kingdom of Northumbria. The Irish chiefs then in alliance with the Danes, were ready to join him in this expedition, and a powerful confederacy was thus formed against Athelstan, while he was occupied with political relations of another kind in the south. In the year 937, Anlaf left Ireland, passed round the north of Scotland, and entered the Humber with six hundred and fifteen ships, and there he united his forces with those of his father-in-law, Constantine, the prince of Cumberland, and several other British chiefs, making together the most formidable army that had ever invaded the British shores. Athelstan, when he heard of this invasion, hastened to meet his enemies with a brave and well appointed army, and the rival forces encamped near each other in the neighbourhood of a place called, in the Anglo-Saxon records, Brunanburh. It was on this occasion that the crafty Anlaf employed a stratagem which is said to have been previously used by king Alfred. In the guise of a harper he gained admission into the Saxon camp, where he played before king Athelstan and his guests during their repast, and received from the Saxon king the usual minstrel's reward. Having obtained the information he required, he returned to his own army, but before he left the camp, disdaining the hireling's wages bestowed on him by Athelstan, he buried it in the earth, and while so engaged he was observed and recognised by a Saxon soldier. The latter immediately communicated his discovery to Athelstan, who upbraided him for not having at once caused the Dane to be arrested, but he replied "O king, the same oath that I have taken for you I formerly took to Anlaf; had I violated it in one instance, you might have expected similar treason towards your-

self; but now listen to the advice of your servant, move yourself to another spot, and wait patiently your reinforcements." The king acted accordingly, and the same evening Werstan, bishop of Sherborne, arrived with a large body of forces, and established his quarters on the spot which the king had occupied in the morning. During the night, Anlaf and his Danes made a sudden attack on the Anglo-Saxon camp, penetrated almost unperceived to the spot on which the royal tent had stood, put the bishop and his attendants to the sword, and were following up their success, when king Athelstan, awakened by the tumult, came up and drove the assailants away.

Two days after this incident the rival armies met and fought the memorable battle of Brunanburh, in which, after a dreadful struggle which lasted from day-break to nightfall, the invaders were entirely defeated, and Anlaf and Constantine escaped with difficulty to their ships with the wreck of their army. Many Danish and British chiefs were slain, and among the rest a son of the Scottish king Constantine. The Scandinavian accounts of this great defeat state that the native Irish sustained an active part in the contest, and that they suffered severely

in the slaughter. The Anglo-Saxon chronicler, exulting in the exploits of his countrymen, leaves his usual prose to celebrate them in high-sounding verse. He tells us how the Scottish people (*Scotta-leode*—probably the Irish) and the mariners (the Danes) "fated fell"—"the field flowed with warriors' blood." The West Saxons and the Mercians rivalled each other in the courage with which they spared "none of the heroes who with Anlaf, in the ship's bosom, came over the ocean to seek our land, fated to the fight. Five young kings lay on the battle place, put to sleep by the sword. And seven of Anlaf's earls, with numbers of his army, both Danes and Irish, lay with them." "Never," continues the poetic annalist, "was there a greater slaughter in this island, since the Angles and Saxons first came hither over the broad sea."

Anlaf returned to Dublin with the Irish and Danes who escaped on this disastrous day. After Athelstan's death, the Northumbrians again chose a king of their own, and they sent to Ireland for Anlaf of Dublin, who was now allowed to place himself on their throne without any serious opposition.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE REIGN OF BRIAN BORU TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NORMANS IN ENGLAND.



HE crown of Ireland appeared, during the last few years, to be rapidly sinking before the ambition of its various subordinate kings; the monarch had become little more than a shadow in his palace—one of the "*rois faineants*"—

and the only obstacle to the ravages of the Danes was now found in the accidental skill or valour of a succession of subordinate chiefs in different parts of the island. A long rivalry and contest between the peoples of the north of Ireland and those of the south increased in proportion as the supreme guiding power became enfeebled; and gradually, the kings of the whole isle, restricted to one branch of one family, shrunk before the vigour of a crown that was alternately

borne by the representatives of two brave tribes, each emulative of the other. The consequence was, as might naturally be expected, that the island, instead of being really subjected to one supreme head, had long been divided into two divisions independent of each other, the power of "the King of Ireland" being restricted to the Leath-Cuinn, while the Leath-Mogha, or southern half, had become the proud domain of the kings of Munster. In the latter half of the tenth century, each of these two grand divisions of Ireland fell under the rule of a monarch calculated to hold a prominent place in the annals of their country.

The first of these was Malachy, who, from his eminent qualities, received from his posterity the title of Malachy the Great. He had succeeded to the throne in 980, on the death of Domnal, the successor of Congelach, killed in 956, in a great battle against the

people of Leinster and the Danes; Domnal, a weak prince, ended his days in pious penitence at Armagh. The other personage to whom we allude, was Brian Boroinmhe, or Boru, one of the most celebrated heroes in the whole range of Irish history.

Kenedy, the prince of the Dalcassian clan, whose turn it was to fill the throne of Munster after the death of king Callachan, had several sons, the two eldest of whom were named Mahon and Brian. The latter was the acknowledged hero of his tribe, and, even in his younger years, when his father was only a prince of the Dalcassians, he was distinguished by his rare bravery in resisting the domestic encroachments of the people of Connaught, as well as the inroads of the Danes. The accession of Mahon to the throne of Munster was the signal for hostilities on a more extensive scale, for the new monarch was no less warlike in disposition than his brother, and one of his first actions was a very decisive victory over the Danes at Loch-Gur. Soon after this, king Mahon, who entered into all the feelings of rivalry of his clan and kingdom against the O'Neils, led a predatory excursion into Connaught, in the course of which the soldiers of Munster gathered together a very considerable amount of plunder. The people of Connaught, however, led by Fergal O'Ruarc, arose, and fell upon the invaders, who were obliged to leave their plunder; and Mahon himself, defeated in battle, was obliged to escape by swimming across a river, leaving his shield behind, one of the greatest personal disgraces that could happen to a soldier in these ages of barbarous chivalry.

The Danes appear now, during several years, to have made an annual inroad, or plundering expedition, into some part or other of the Irish territory, for the purpose of weakening their enemies, and collecting plunder, and in these raids they were generally joined by their allies, the Irish of Leinster. The success of these invasions was, however, by no means uniform. Thus, in 962, the men of Ossory met a large party of Danes under their king Anlaf, the grandson of Sitric, and defeated them with considerable slaughter. In 965, Muiredach, abbot of Kildare, who is said to have claimed the crown of Leinster by right of descent, was slain in battle by the Danes under Anlaf, who espoused the cause of his rival claimant, Carroll the son of Lorcan. In 966, the Danes and people of Leinster were defeated in more than one battle by the

monarch of Ireland, Domnal. In the year following Kells was laid waste by Sitric, son of Anlaf, and his ally the king of Leinster, but they were subsequently defeated with great loss by the Irish monarch. In 968, Kells was again laid waste by the Danes and people of Leinster, under Anlaf, who committed extensive depredations, and defeated the O'Neils at Ardmulchan. King Domnal, however, defeated them in several encounters during the year, and at Monasterboice, which he plundered, he is said to have burnt three hundred and fifty Danes in one house.

In Munster, the Danes met with greater obstacles in the bravery of king Mahon and his brother Brian, who, in 968, inflicted upon them so terrible a defeat in a battle at the pass of Sulcoid, about a day's march from Limerick, that they are said to have left three thousand on the field of battle, in addition to those who were slain in the pursuit. The victors entered Limerick along with the vanquished, where they again committed terrible slaughter: after having sacked the town, from which they carried off great spoils of gold, silver, and merchandise of all kinds, they set fire to the houses, and destroyed the fortifications. The following year the Danes of Limerick were expelled by king Mahon from Inis-Ubbdain. In 970, the Danes of Limerick, with their Irish auxiliaries, were again defeated by the people of Munster, under their king and his brother, who gained another remarkable victory over them in 972. Similar triumphs distinguished the years 973 and 975.

The uniform good fortune of the king of Munster now raised envious rivals among his own countrymen. Maolnuadh, a prince of the O'Neachach, who appears to have entered into alliance with the Danes, was so deeply mortified by a defeat which he had sustained from Mahon and his brother, that he brooded on revenge; and having, with another chief named Donovan, concerted a plan by which he expected to gain possession of his enemy, he invited him to a friendly conference. King Mahon, suspecting no treachery, came unguarded to the place of meeting, where he was immediately surrounded by the conspirators, and carried off by night to a solitary place in the Muskerry mountains, still, it is said, called Leacht-Magama, or Mahon's Grave, where they basely murdered him.*

* Irish antiquaries are not agreed on the site of this murder. Some say that it was on a mountain in

This deed of blood was perpetrated in the year 976, and Brian Boru, who had previously held the subordinate sovereignty of Thomond, or North Munster, succeeded to the throne of his brother, and lost no time in taking revenge upon his murderers, who, though supported by a strong force of their Danish confederates, were defeated in a sanguinary battle, named by the bards, perhaps from its vicinity to Mahon's Grave, Cath Bhealaig-Leachta, or the battle of the road of the sepulchre. In this battle, Maolmuadh was slain by Brian's son, Morrough. King Brian, after this victory, determined to pursue his success against the Danish auxiliaries, who had fled early in the battle, and had thus exposed their Irish allies to a more disastrous defeat than they would perhaps otherwise have experienced. He proceeded to the isle of Iniscathy in the mouth of the Shannon, which, with its eleven churches and the shrine of St. Senan, had been repeatedly plundered and ravaged by the Danish invaders, who had finally established themselves there, and made it their stronghold, from whence they issued to desolate the neighbouring coasts. Brian landed on the island with a strong party of his own tribe of the Dalcassians, in whose fidelity he appears to have put his chief trust, to revenge the murder of his brother; and he drove the Danes not only from hence, but from all the smaller isles of the Shannon, which he plundered and laid desolate. It was the Danes of the powerful state of Limerick with whom he had here again to contend.

These repeated successes raised the reputation and consequent influence of the king of Munster to such a degree, that he soon became not only the terror of the Danes, but a dangerous rival to the monarch of Ireland; and we shall not be surprised if we find him soon aspiring to arrogate to the southern division, or Leath-Mogha, the supreme sovereignty of the island, the grand object of the ambition of several of his predecessors. Their efforts were at length crowned by the genius and political talents of Brian Boru.

Nevertheless, the two kings, both actuated by the generous feelings of patriotism called forth by the state of Ireland when they ascended their respective thrones, turned at first their united efforts against the com-

mon enemy of their country. The crown was scarcely on his head when king Malachy found the Danes of Dublin and the isles, in the very heart of his own dominions; and laying aside the sceptre to embrace the sword, he not only compelled them to relinquish all their advantages, but in a battle which lasted, according to the old writers who have recorded it, during three days and three nights almost without interruption, he so entirely broke down their power and their spirits, that they willingly entered into the humiliating treaty which he imposed upon them. One of its principal conditions was, that all the Irish captives whom the Danes of Ireland held in slavery, should be immediately set at liberty. Among the number, we are informed, were Domnal king of Leinster, and O'Neil prince of Tyrone. This great battle, said to have been fought in 980, is commonly known as the battle of Tara. In no former battle on the Irish shores had the northmen ever experienced so great a slaughter, or lost so many distinguished chiefs. Among the latter was a favourite son of king Anlaf, named Reginald; and the royal father was so much affected by his loss, that he laid down his sceptre to go on a pilgrimage to Iona, and there shortly afterwards died of grief. Christianity had already made its way among the Irish Danes, though it seems as yet to have done little towards diminishing their predatory spirit or their ferocity.

Near the same time, the Danes of Cork and Waterford gave their assistance to the people of Leinster in resisting the tribute which the kings of Munster had for several ages claimed of that province as a subordinate portion of the Leath-Mogha, of which these princes were considered as wielding the entire sovereignty. O'Felan, prince of the Desies, placed himself at the head of this new confederacy, in which the prince of Ossory also took a prominent part, and the first muster of forces, in which the Danes appear to have been most numerous, was made in a place called by the chroniclers the Circle of the sons of Conrad (a Bhfan mc Connradh). These preparations had not, however, escaped the attention of the watchful king of Munster, who, suddenly falling upon the united army, defeated them with great slaughter, and, pursuing them closely from the field of battle, forced the Danish auxiliaries to seek refuge within the walls of Waterford. He then entered Ossory, made captive its prince, and obliged the dependent

chiefs to give hostages for their future fidelity. Brian next entered Leinster, and ravaged the whole province in a cruel manner, until he had forced its inhabitants to submit to humiliating terms, by which they bound themselves to pay the tribute without further hesitation. The two kings of Leinster were compelled to come before the conqueror in his tent, and tender the contribution in person.

Various acts of hostility between the king of Munster and his superior sovereign are, from time to time, recorded by the different chroniclers, but these recorders of events became now so prejudiced, according to the part of the island in which they happened to live, that it is difficult to say which party gave the first provocation, or, indeed, to determine with any certainty which first took up arms against the other. One of the earliest acts of hostility mentioned, is that recorded by the Annals of Inisfallen in the year 982, when king Malachy, who had then newly ascended the throne of Ireland, invaded and ravaged the district of the Dalcassian tribe (answering to the modern county of Clare); and in the course of this inroad, the king ordered the Bile-Magh-Adair, or sacred tree in the "Plain of Adoration" at Adair, under which, in earlier times, the princes of the Dalcassians had undergone the ceremony of inauguration, to be cut down, and then his army returned home laden with plunder. As no war followed this aggression, it is probable that it was merely undertaken to punish some of those acts of border warfare which must have been of frequent occurrence with neighbours like the Dalcassians; but the cutting down of the sacred tree was an indignity offered to Brian himself, as the chief of the tribe, and seems to indicate hostile feelings of another kind, which are confirmed, rather than otherwise, by the events of the following year. King Malachy then raised a larger army, and laid waste the province of Leinster, which was a direct attack upon Brian's sovereignty, as head of the Leath-Mogha, in which that province was included. The king of Munster marched immediately into Leinster, prepared to vindicate his rights by force of arms; but further hostilities were prevented by a convention between the two kings, by which the sovereignty of each was assured within the limits of his half of the island according to the old division of Leath-Cuinn and Leath-Mogha, all prisoners taken by each party from the other were to be

released from captivity, and the tribute of Leinster, which was again the subject of dispute, was left to the crown of Munster. We hear of no further hostilities between the two rival kings till 988, when Brian, for some cause or other which is not known, raised a large army, which he embarked in boats on the Shannon, and thus proceeding as far as Lough Ree, he there divided his forces into two parts, one of which he sent to desolate the western parts of Connaught, while with the other he plundered the royal appanage of Meath.

In the midst of these mutual provocations between the two kings, who were already beginning to contend for the supreme power in Ireland, the inroads of the Danes became more frequent and more destructive, arising chiefly from the arrivals of new adventurers from the north. In 982, the monarch of Ireland, king Malachy, joined with the Danes of Dublin, and enabled them to defeat the Danes of Waterford and the king of Leinster, who seems to have stirred up the war, in a sanguinary battle. The Danes of Dublin, thus victorious, overrun Leinster with little opposition, and devastated Glendalough. In 985 three Danish ships arrived on the coast of Antrim, but they were beaten away, and they subsequently joined with others of their countrymen in an attack upon Iona, which they laid desolate on Christmas night. Exasperated by these and other injuries, of which the Danes of Dublin seem to have been among the foremost promoters, king Malachy marched against that city in 988, and having defeated the Danes in a great battle without the walls, he laid siege to their fortress during twenty days, until they were reduced to drink sea water, and then they agreed to pay the tribute the Irish king demanded, and to add to it every year an ounce of gold for every principal habitation in Dublin. Among the outrages perpetrated by the foreigners during this year, the annalists record an invasion of Ulster by the Danes of the Isles, who were defeated, with the loss of their chief; another inroad, in which Down, the burial-place of St. Patrick, was plundered and burnt; an incursion into Derry; and another into West Meath by the Danes, in conjunction with the Irish of Ulster, who spread desolation through the country as far as Lough Ennell, near Mullingar. In 992, the Danes of Dublin plundered Meath, and laid desolate some of its holiest churches. Domestic seditions seem, about this time, to have broken out in Dublin

itself, which were probably fostered by the Irish allies. The early chroniclers inform us, that in this same year, 992, a Danish chief, named Ivar (the name which, in Anglo-Saxon, is written Hinguar), was, "through the intercession of the saints," expelled from Dublin; and soon afterwards, in the same year, the heir to the throne of Leinster was slain by the son of Anlaf the Dane. These events appear to have been followed by a domestic revolution in Dublin; and, in 994, Ivar returned. In another, or rather a counter revolution, in which the agency of the Irish of Leinster is indicated by the circumstance mentioned by the chroniclers, that they slew a Danish chief named Reginald, Ivar was again driven away, and was succeeded in the government of Dublin by Sitric, whom he had deposed.

In the middle of these events, which distinguished the year 994, the Danes of Dublin, and the Irish of Leinster, again invaded and desolated Meath. King Malachy, provoked at this outrage, retaliated by marching his army into Leinster, and not only defeated the confederates in battle, but, on this occasion, carried off two trophies which are much spoken of by the Irish bards, the golden collar of Tomar (probably one of those articles to which archæologists have given the name of torques), and the sword of Carlus. According to the later traditions, king Malachy slew the two chiefs to whom these articles belonged, and from whom they received their names.

Scarcely a year had passed since Brian Boru's invasion of the territory of king Malachy, in 988, which did not witness alternate inroads by one of these monarchs into the territory of the other. For in the same year which saw Malachy's victory over the Danes, and capture of the trophies just alluded to, the monarch invaded Munster, met Brian in battle, and inflicted upon him a severe defeat. Next year, the king of Munster invaded Meath, defeated king Malachy, and burnt his royal palace. These mutual hostilities were not put a stop to till 997, when the two kings entered into a new league, similar to that of 983, and united their forces against the Danes.

In 998, the men of Leinster again refused to pay their tribute, and, as usual, the Danes of Dublin, under their chiefs Sitric, Harold the son of Anlaf, and others, joined them in their revolt. The king of Munster and king Malachy united their forces, marched into Leinster, and defeated the revolters with

great slaughter. The two kings marched to Dublin, and exacted hostages and tribute; but the same year they were obliged to return again with their army to Dublin, from whence they carried away both hostages and spoils. The next year, A.D. 999, the two kings again joined their forces to chastise the insolence of the Danes, and encamped in a valley near Dunlavin, on the borders of Wicklow and Dublin, then called Glenn-Mama. They were here suddenly attacked by the Danes, who had come from Dublin in great force in the hope of taking them by surprise, but the good fortune of the Irish monarchs again prevailed, and the Danes were defeated with great slaughter. Prince Harold, the son of Anlaf, was among the slain. A new inroad by the Danes the same year drew upon them a new defeat, and on this occasion the victors pursued them to Dublin, which they captured and plundered, and destroyed the Danish fort. Sitric, the son of Anlaf, appears to have been the great enemy of the Irish, and he was again expelled from his throne. But the Danes were allowed to re-establish themselves in Dublin, on paying their tribute and giving new hostages.

In this last expedition against Dublin, as far as we can gather from the annalists, king Malachy took no part. He appears already to have begun to suspect the ultimate views of his rival, and, on some provocation with which we are not acquainted, hostilities had been resumed between them. It became daily more evident that the power of Munster, under Brian Boru, would before long overwhelm the throne of the family of the great Nial. Brian had this year defeated the Danes in another battle, called from the river on the banks of which it was fought, on the borders of Roscommon and Galway, the battle of the Suck. But his first attack upon king Malachy was not a successful one, for in the year 1000, the king of Munster marching into Meath with an army consisting of his own immediate subjects, as well as the men of Leinster and the Danes of Dublin, the latter, hurrying forward in advance, are said to have been routed by king Malachy, and the chroniclers only add that "Brian was obliged to return home without battle, or waste, or burning."

Brian Boru now hardly concealed his design of seizing upon the crown of Ireland. The earlier and more authentic chroniclers leave this last invasion of king Malachy's territory enveloped in mystery. But later

writers, who made the great Irish hero the subject of their pen, filled up the bare outlines with a story, according to which, king Malachy, after destroying the Danish cavalry, found that the forces he had been able to raise for the defence of his kingdom were much too inferior in number to those of his able opponent to allow him to risk a battle. They tell us, that the weakness of Malachy's government, his want of courage to withstand the desolating inroads of the Danes (an accusation not justified by his acts, as handed down to us by the authentic historians), and other failings, had so disgusted the Irish in general, that they wished for the triumph of the hero Brian, and that king Malachy's own subjects refused to repair to his standard. In this distress, the king, we are told, sent a message to Brian Boru, representing to him the disparity of numbers between the two armies, and proposing that the latter should withdraw for a year in order to give him time to collect his forces, and that then he would either meet him in battle, if able, or that, if unable to defend it efficiently, he would quietly resign the crown into Brian's hands. The chivalrous and generous hero of the romances listened to king Malachy's entreaties, forewent all the advantages of his private position, and retired with his forces into Munster to await the convenience of his rival.

There is little, however, in the previous or subsequent behaviour of the historical Brian Boru to lead us to expect so much self-denial. Whatever may have been his motives for retreating in 1000, it is certain that in the year following he collected a formidable army, and marched direct upon Tara, where king Malachy resigned the crown without a struggle, and Brian Boru was acknowledged monarch of Ireland. Nearly the whole force of the Danes of Ireland served in the ranks of the king of Munster on this occasion.

It is evident that Brian's usurpation was not acceptable to the subordinate chiefs of the north of Ireland, and that his crown was gained and held by the dread only of his name, from the significant circumstance that the first two or three years of his reign were spent in continual progresses round his kingdom, for the purpose of receiving hostages from them, and striking dread into all classes of his subjects. These armed progresses were in some instances called for by actual or threatened rebellion. Different

branches of the O'Neils, especially those of Ulster, raised their banner against him more than once; but their defeat, and the frequent demonstrations of strength he was thus obliged to make, increased his power, and tended only to ensure the obedience of his subjects through the extensive country now placed under his rule, more difficult to govern on account of the discordant materials of which it was composed. King Malachy alone seemed to have resigned himself patiently to his fate, and, in his subordinate dignity of king of Meath, it was not unusual for him to attend in the progresses of the sovereign who had usurped his sceptre.

The Irish poets described the reign of Brian Boru as the golden age of their country; and, without entering into their exaggerated views of the prosperity and happiness of his government, we must acknowledge that Ireland seemed for a while relieved from those domestic troubles and invasions from abroad which had torn the island throughout all previous periods of what can be regarded, with any stretch of indulgence, as authentic history. By liberal gifts and concessions to the church, the new monarch gained the support of the clergy during his life, and ensured for himself a good reputation with posterity through the monkish annalists. His undoubted valour and conduct in war rendered him popular among men, who, from long habit, were accustomed to measure right almost solely by might, and who respected justice more from the array of force which surrounded it, and the vigour with which it was carried into effect, than from the love of justice itself. We are assured by the panegyrists of Brian Boru, that under his rule equal justice was impartially administered; that he suffered no one to transgress the laws; and they describe the respect that was universally shown to them in the poetically symbolical form which has been so often repeated under similar feelings, by telling us,* that a young damsel of surpassing beauty, robed in a costly dress covered with jewels, carrying in her hand a wand, with a

* An Irish poet quoted by Geoffrey Keating alludes to this exploit in the following terms, as given in English by his translator:—

"The Institutes of Brian Boruimhe,
So wholesome for the support of virtue,
Were kept with so much reverence and regard,
That a young lady, of exquisite beauty,
Adorned with jewels and a ring of gold,
Travelled alone on foot from north to south,
And no attempt was made upon her honour,
Or to divest her of the clothes she wore."

gold ring of great value fixed at the top, wandered, without attendants, from the northernmost part of the island to the south, and that no one attempted, either in face of day, or under cover of the shades of night, to rob her of her honour, to strip her of her rich apparel, or even to steal her ring of gold. The bards speak with admiration of the splendour of Brian's court, and of the immensity of the tribute that was brought in to him from all parts of the island; and they speak of him as employing it freely in the encouragement of literature (as literature then existed in Ireland), in restoring and founding schools, in rebuilding and embellishing the royal palaces, in erecting fortifications for the protection of the kingdom, and in making roads and bridges through his extensive domains.

The Danes and their old allies, the people of Leinster, were, with few interruptions, obedient to the crown of Ireland, which they had contributed to place on Brian's head, paid their tribute regularly, and received in return its protection. But during the two last years of Brian's reign, encouraged probably by new arrivals of hungry Danes from the north, or from England, where their countrymen were at this period spreading desolation through the land, the Danes joined with the king of Leinster in raising new troubles. In 1013, their united forces entered Meath, and plundered its inhabitants with savage ferocity. Goaded by this attack, Malachy, king of Meath, invaded Leinster as far as the hill of Howth, where, rashly engaging with superior forces, he experienced a severe defeat, and lost his son Flann in the slaughter. We are perfectly in the dark as to the secret motives of action among the prominent personages of this period, and the annalists tell us little to clear up the obscurity; but one of them informs us that when, after his defeat, king Malachy applied to Brian Boru for his protection, the latter absolutely refused to give him any assistance. The movements of the Danes and their allies, however, soon afterwards became so threatening, that Brian was obliged to march against them to protect his own more immediate territories, and, dispatching his son Murrough into Leinster, he marched himself through the country of Ossory, spreading devastation along his way, and encamped with his army in the neighbourhood of Dublin, where Murrough, after plundering and desolating Leinster with fire and sword to the sacred vicinity of Glenda-

lough, returned to him laden with spoils. After remaining near Dublin till Christmas (1013), and attempting in vain to draw out the Danes and people of Leinster from their strong positions, Brian returned home with abundance of plunder, but without a battle. Another party of Danes had taken advantage of his absence to retaliate on his own people the mischief his son was inflicting on the plains of Leinster; for, landing in the south of Munster, they ravaged the country around and plundered and burnt Cork.

The causes which led to this war, and to the great catastrophe which soon followed, are told by the poetical historians of a later date, as abstracted by Keating, somewhat as follows. The queen of Brian Boru, we are told by them, was the sister of Maolmordha-mac-Murchudha, king of Leinster, who had been raised to that dignity at the end of the tenth century by the agency of the Danes, and who appears always to have been regarded at the court of Munster with some degree of mistrust. After the great Brian had ruled the kingdom for some years, he resolved, in anticipation of future attempts to invade the island, to build shipping and become formidable at sea. It appears that Leinster was celebrated for its timber, and the monarch accordingly sent a messenger to the king of that province, desiring that he would furnish him with three of the longest and largest masts that could be found in his territory. Maolmordha complied, and ordering his woods to be surveyed, and three of the fairest trees to be chosen by his shipwrights and cut down and lopped, he proceeded to escort them in person to the palace of Ceann-Coradh, or Kinkora, where the kings of Munster usually held their court. The first of these three masts was carried by the people of Jobh-Failge, the second by those of Jobh-Faolain, and the third by those of Jobh-Muireadhuig. When they assembled at a place near the wood where the trees grew, a violent contest arose between the three tribes, who strove for the precedence in marching first with their burden and being first admitted into the presence of the king of all Ireland. The king of Leinster, when he heard of the quarrel, and of the consequent hesitation in proceeding on the journey, came in an angry mood to the spot, gave the precedence to the tribe of Jobh-Faolain, and, having descended from his horse, went with some warmth and pushed his way through the throng, and placing his shoulder under the tree of the

favoured tribe, took his share of the burden, and proceeded with them on foot. It happened that the king of Leinster was clad in a rich embroidered mantle of silk, which had been presented to him by Brian Boru when he delivered his hostages and tribute, and which he was proud of wearing as a mark of distinction. The dress was ill calculated for brawls like this; and in the heat of the struggle, the button which held it before flew off and was lost.

The escort now proceeded slowly on its way, and, meeting with no further interruption, arrived safely at Kinkora, where they were received very honourably by the king of Ireland; and the king of Leinster especially was welcomed by his sister the queen. After the common salutations and ceremonies of meeting were over, king Maolmordha, with the simplicity (we must suppose) of the primitive manners of the age, desired his royal sister that she would be pleased to fix a button upon his mantle in place of the one he had lost in the scuffle between the three tribes, because, he said, he was proud of the honour of wearing it on his shoulders as a badge of his obedience to her husband, the great Brian Boru. But it appears that the queen possessed far less humility than her brother; for, instead of immediately sewing on the button, she upbraided the king of Leinster with his servile spirit, reminded him of the power and glory of their forefathers, and, snatching the splendid garment from his back, threw it into a large fire that was near at hand, and the badge of his subjection was speedily reduced to ashes.

The king of Leinster was stung with the reproaches of his sister, but he concealed his sentiments. Next day he received a new provocation; for, being in company with Brian's eldest son, Murrough, who was playing at chess with Conning, the son of Dunchuain, the king recommended the latter to make a certain move which caused Murrough to lose the game. The prince was angry at Maolmordha's interference, and, among other insulting reproaches, he told him that it was by his treacherous advice the Danes lost the battle of Glenn-Madhma. The king of Leinster retorted upon Murrough by the threat, that if the Danes had been defeated by his advice, he would soon put them in a way to retrieve their loss, and take full revenge on himself and his father Brian. He then retired to his chamber, brooding over the indignity now offered to him, and his sister's reproaches on the preceding day;

and, fearing that his own indiscreet language to the prince might lead to his arrest, he arose very early the next morning, and fled privately from the court of Kinkora. On his arrival in his own kingdom, he called together the chiefs of Leinster, who were all in favour of an insurrection; the Danes joined in the confederacy; and messengers were despatched to the shores of Britain, to the isles, and even to distant Scandinavia, to gather strength for the great struggle to overthrow the power of Brian Boru.

This story, ridiculous enough in itself, was probably built upon a tradition which made the king of Leinster the primary mover in the events we are now going to relate from records of a more authentic character. It is remarkable, however, that the old Danish account of these events, preserved in the Icelandic Njala Saga, coincides with the Irish tradition in representing Brian Boru's queen as the first instigator of the war. This princess, who, as it has been already observed, was the sister of Maolmordha, king of Leinster, was an ambitious, and, as we are told, an exceedingly beautiful woman. Her name, according to the Irish writers, was Gormflaith, or Gormlaith; the Icelandic Saga calls her Kornloda, which is evidently the same name. She had married first, Aulaf Cuaran, Danish king of Dublin, by whom she was mother of Sitric, who reigned over the Danes of Dublin at the period of which we are now speaking. On his death, she had espoused, in second marriage, Brian, king of Munster, before his usurpation of the throne of Ireland.* For some reason or other, according to the Icelandic account, Kornloda had been repudiated by king Brian, and, in revenge, she conspired against his life, and urged her son Sitric to join in compassing his death. Each of the two chiefs of the confederacy, Sigurd, earl of the Orkneys, and Brodar, the sea-king, is said to have been allured into it by the promise that he should receive the beautiful Kornloda to wife.

On Palm Sunday, the 18th of April, 1014, an immense armament of the foreigners made its way into the bay of Dublin, and poured its host of adventurers on the northern shore. The warriors of the Orkneys and Western isles were ranged under the banner of their

* The death of this queen is recorded in the annals of the Four Masters, under the year 1030, where an Irish verse is quoted which says, that she made three leaps greater than any woman ever made before, namely those of Dublin, Cashel, and Tara, meaning that she became queen first of Dublin, then of Munster, and eventually of all Ireland.

chieftain, earl Sigurd; the sea-king, Brodar, brought his troops of Danes and Norwegians from Scandinavia; and other chiefs left their prey in England to take a part in this great fray on the Irish soil. We are told, that among the invaders were Britons from Wales and Cornwall, and Northmen from Neustria and Flanders. Among their numerous leaders were two sons of Sweyn king of Denmark, named Carolus Knutus and Andreas. This formidable army was no sooner landed than it was joined by the whole strength of the Danes of Dublin, under king Sitric, and by the army of Leinster, led by king Maolmordha, and a number of subordinate princes. The confederate forces, reckoned by the Irish annalists at twenty-one thousand men, took up their position along the higher ground commanding the plain of Clontarf.

Brian Boru had foreseen the storm that was now ready to break over him, and he had made his preparations to meet it. According to the Danish account, which represents the confederation as having been formed and conducted with the greatest secrecy, the fleet of the invaders was at first commanded by two sea-kings, Brodar and Ospak, but they tell us that the two chiefs having quarrelled, Ospak left the confederacy, and repaired to the court of Brian, to whom he carried the first intelligence of the formidable preparations for the invasion of his dominions. The aged monarch—he is said to have been in his eighty-eighth year—had lost none of his energy, and he summoned the subordinate chiefs, from every part of Ireland, to meet him in arms. The Irish annalists, who estimate Brian's army at about twenty thousand men, take a pride in enumerating the various tributary leaders who answered to his call. The chief of Brian's own kinsmen, including his eldest son Murrough, and his five other sons, Teige, Donough, Donal, Connor, and Flann, with his grandson, Turlogh, and several nephews and other relations, were there, with their tribe of the Dalcassians, collected from the modern counties of Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary. The Eugenians, from Desmond, and the Desies, came under their leader, Cian, prince of Desmond. The forces of Connaught were led by their king, Teige O'Connor, who also was accompanied by an array of illustrious chiefs. King Malachy led to Brian's assistance a thousand of the choicest fighting-men of Meath. Ulster alone, which had always bowed with reluctance to the supremacy of Munster, held back, and was only

represented in Brian's army by a few of its men, and one or two subordinate chiefs. To make up for this defection, a strong body of Scottish warriors, from Lennox, arrived in time to swell the ranks of the Irish army; and Ospak, the sea-king, with his Danes, also served under the king of Ireland. Brian accompanied his army in person, but he gave the active command to his son, Murrough; and, marching hastily to Dublin, he took up his position outside the city, at Kilmainham, in front of the enemy with whom he was about to contend. Before his arrival, Brian had despatched secretly his son Donough, with a choice body of men selected from the two great tribes of the Dalcassians and Eugenians, to plunder the province of Leinster, in the hope of thus causing a diversion in the hostile ranks by forcing the king of Leinster to take care of his own dominions; and he gave strict orders to his son to return after two days, in the confidence that a battle would not take place before the expiration of that period.

There were, it seems, traitors on both sides; and one of these sent information to the Danish camp of the departure of Donough, and his plundering expedition, and urged the invaders to make their attack while the Irish army was weakened by his absence. The Danish accounts give another reason for the early attack made by their countrymen. They tell us that Brodar, the Danish leader, had been for some time a Christian, but that he became subsequently a renegade, and that he was profoundly skilled in magic. Having, before the war, consulted some of the oracular mysteries of the superstitious faith of the North, he received an answer, that, if the first great battle were fought on a Friday, Brian Boru would fall on the field; but that if the battle took place on any other day, Brian would be triumphant, and all the leaders of the Danish army would be slain.

When the Irish army arrived at Kilmainham, on the day before Good Friday, the king of Leinster is represented as following the fashion of the heroic ages in sending king Brian a formal challenge to fight on the morrow in the plain of Clontarf. The king of Ireland, it is added, refused the day, because he was reluctant to engage in battle on so holy a festival, although he knew that, by his own orders, one of his sons would, on that very day, be slaughtering and plundering the defenceless inhabitants of a tributary kingdom. Brian was, therefore, surprised when, at day-break on Good Friday, he

beheld the Danish army advancing in order of battle into the plain of Clontarf. Compelled to engage, in spite of his religious scruples, and the absence of the plundering party, the Irish monarch drew up his army in haste, visited the ranks in person, exasperating them against their foe by his words and exhortations, telling them that God had made them fight on his own day as a certain omen of approaching victory, and then, yielding to the infirmities of age, he left them to fight under his son Murrough, and retired to a spot in the immediate neighbourhood of the battle, where he had fixed his tent, that the combatants might, at least, be encouraged by his presence. Tradition points out an elevated spot on the sea shore, near the present village of Clontarf, now known by the name of Conquer Hill, as the site of Brian Boru's tent.

The army of the Danes, and their Irish confederates, marched into the field in three distinct bodies.* The first division was formed by the Danes of Dublin, and was led to battle by two chiefs of considerable renown, named Dolat and Conmaol. With them were a celebrated band of a thousand Northmen, represented by the old writers as having been cased in mail, who had been brought from Norway by two princes named Anrud and Carolus. King Maolmordha commanded the second division, which was formed chiefly of his own subjects, joined with a large body of Danish auxiliaries. The third division was formed of the various bands of Danes who had been assembled there from distant regions, of the warriors from the islands, and of the Britons, or Welsh, and other foreigners of different races; this body was led by the sea-king, Brodar, and Sigurd, earl of the Orkneys, or, according to some, by his son. The Irish army was also arrayed in three bodies to answer to the similar disposition of the enemy. The first consisted of the thousand warriors from Meath, and of the household troops of Munster, the Dalcassian tribe, whose oft-tried valour had so frequently gained for them the honour of occupying the post of danger, with a body of men from Conmacnemara; these were under the immediate command of Murrough and king Malachy, and most of Brian's kinsmen fought under

their banners. The second division of the Irish forces was composed of the Eugenians, and of the various clans of the south of Munster, and was commanded by two Eugénian princes, Cian, who was celebrated by the bards for his beauty and stature, and Donald. One of the chiefs of Ulster, named O'Carroll, and Maguire, prince of Fermanagh, were placed, with their men, in this division. Brian's third division consisted chiefly of the men of Connaught, with the remainder of the clans from Ulster; it was commanded by O'Connor, son of the king of Connaught, with a numerous array of illustrious chieftains.

The conduct of the battle after the two hostile armies met was similar to that of all engagements between races at that particular period in the march of civilization; the details consisted of a succession of single combats between chieftain and chieftain, who singled each other out, while the common soldiers were engaged in indiscriminate slaughter, and these combats alone were celebrated by the minstrel, and transferred from his song to the pages of the chronicles. We are told that the war-song of each army was sounded soon after break of day, and that they were still engaged in the work of slaughter when the dusk of evening approached. At first the thousand mailed warriors from the north bore down every obstacle, and spread desolation through the Irish ranks, till they were attacked by Murrough and his Dalcassians, who, after a desperate combat, succeeded so effectually in destroying them that not a man is said to have escaped. Then Murrough, flushed with the victory he had obtained over this formidable band, rushed from one side of the field to the other in search of champions worthy to experience his prowess. One of the first of these was Sigurd, earl of the Orkneys, whom Murrough slew with his battle-axe. Conmaol, and Carolus, one of the sons of the king of Norway, were also slain by the irresistible Murrough. It was towards the end of the day when the latter fell, and his brother Anrud, thirsting to revenge the blood of his family, was also slain by the Irish chieftain, who, seizing him in his powerful grasp, literally shook him out of his armour, and then pierced him through the body with his sword; but, as he withdrew the fatal weapon, Anrud suddenly seized his dagger and plunged it into Murrough's breast, who was carried from the field mortally wounded. The fate of the day was,

* The authorities for the description of this battle are the Irish Annals, more especially those of Inisfallen, and the Icelandic Saga. The native and foreign authorities agree much more closely in the general outline than might have been expected.

however, already decided. The battle had raged incessantly during the whole of the day, and the issue was long doubtful. They still show a well at Clontarf, where it is said that the Irish champions, weary with the fatigues of the melee, repaired frequently during the battle to quench their thirst and bathe their arms swoln with wielding the sword or the axe, and then returned refreshed to the field, till a party of the Danes, who had watched their motions, made themselves masters of the place, and breaking down the banks of the fountain scattered its waters over the ground. Towards evening, after the destruction of the thousand northmen and the death of so many of their chieftains, the Danes began to give way, and before dark the rout was general.

It was at this moment that Brodar, who, with a small number of his followers, had taken shelter in a wood near king Brian's tent, observing that the spot was nearly deserted, rushed out from his place of concealment and surrounded it with his companions. The king was on his knees engaged in returning thanks to heaven for his victory, and his only attendant was a boy, who threw himself in vain between the aged monarch and his assailants. Brian seized an axe to defend himself, but, after a short struggle, the seaking slew him with his sword, and then rushing forth he held aloft the bloody weapon and cried aloud, "Let it be proclaimed from man to man that Brian Boru has fallen by the hand of Brodar!" This cry, intended to recall the flying Danes to the battle, had only the effect of bringing back some of the king's guards who had rashly engaged in the pursuit; after slaughtering his companions they seized upon the proud Dane, and we are told by the northern historians of the battle that, in their rage at the death of their king, they hung him to a tree and tore out his entrails.

The battle was now contested far away from the original scene of combat, and fierce conflicts took place between the flying parties and their pursuers along the shore towards Raheny, Baldoy, and the hill of Howth, on one side, and on the other as far as the river Tolka and the place now called Ballybough Bridge. This latter direction was the one taken by the Irish Danes and their allies of Leinster, who, with their king Sitric, found a refuge within the walls of Dublin. The foreigners retreated to Howth, their naval station; multitudes were slaughtered on the way, and many, including a

great number of their women, were drowned in attempting to regain their ships. The Irish remained on the field of battle weeping over the body of their king, and attending to his son Murrough, who expired on the morning after the battle.* On that day, which was Easter Saturday, they all returned to their camp at Kilmainham, where they were joined by Brian's son Donough, who had returned from Leinster laden with spoils.

The fame of the sanguinary battle of Clontarf reached the continent of Europe, and its disastrous consequences were long remembered by the Danes, who spoke of it with terror even in the distant parts of the north. The slaughter must have been very great; but the loss fell especially on the chiefs of either army, a circumstance easily accounted for by their practice of singling each other out for single combat. Few of the Danish chieftains escaped from the field, and Maolmordha, king of Leinster, was among the first who fell. On the side of the Irish fell, besides king Brian, several of his sons, his grandson, and most of his nephews, and a long list of renowned warriors. The corpses of the more distinguished chiefs were collected into the camp at Kilmainham by Cian, one of the few who remained to perform the last melancholy duties to their brave companions in arms. The body of Brian Boru was carried in solemn procession to the abbey of St. Columba, at Swords, by the monks of that place, and on Easter Sunday it was conveyed thence to the monastery of St. Kieran, at Duleek. On the Monday it was again removed to the abbey of Louth; and on the fourth day it was carried by archbishop Maolmuire and his clergy, in great pomp, to the metropolitan church of Armagh, where the king had formerly expressed his wish to be buried. The body was there embalmed, and deposited in a stone coffin at the north side of the great altar, after the obsequies had continued with great magnificence and solemnity during twelve days and twelve nights. The bodies of Murrough, and his son Turlough,

* The reader will remember the words of Moore, in one of his Melodies,—

"Remember the glories of Brian the brave,
Though the days of the hero are o'er,
Though lost to Momania, and cold in his grave,
He returns to Kinkora no more.
That star of the field, which so often hath pour'd
Its beam on the battle, is set,
But enough of its glory remains on each sword
To light us to victory yet.

as well as the heads of Brian's nephew, Conang, and Motha O'Felan, prince of the Desies, were buried in the south side of the cathedral.

The mighty power of the great chieftain crumbled away on his death. Before the corpse of Brian had been committed to the grave, the camp of Kilmainham narrowly escaped being the scene of a sanguinary contest for the succession to the crown of Munster. Cian, who was the head of the Eugenian tribe, claimed the crown according to the old custom, or law, of alternate inheritance, and demanded of the remaining sons of Brian hostages for their obedience. These they refused to give, or to acknowledge Cian's title, and the quarrel being with difficulty arranged for the moment, the whole army broke up from Kilmainham, and returned in sorrow, with their sick and wounded, towards Munster. When they reached the borders of Ossory, the people of that district, glad to have escaped from the stern rule of Brian Boru, refused them a passage, unless they would give hostages as an acknowledgment of the independent authority of their prince. A battle, however, was avoided by a stratagem employed by Donchad, who had now assumed the command of the retiring army, and he was allowed to march without further hindrance into Munster.

One of the sovereign princes who had marched into the fatal field of Clontarf escaped from the slaughter, and this was king Malachy, the old victim of Brian's ambition. The Munster annalists, in their anxiety to raise the fame of their own hero, have attempted to obscure and even to sully the character of Malachy. Some say that it was he who conveyed to the Danes the treasonable information that Donough and his party had been detached into Leinster, and the suggestion which led them to attack the Irish on Good Friday; and they add that, in fulfilment of an agreement he had entered into at that time, the king drew off his thousand soldiers of Meath at the beginning of the battle, and that retiring with them to a short distance from the field, he remained there an idle and unconcerned spectator of the contest. But every circumstance known combines to make us believe that Malachy had come forwards zealously and in good faith to serve the cause of his country under the banner of Brian Boru, and that he contributed actively towards its triumph; and, although no mention is made of his parti-

cular exploits on that fatal day, the death of Brian was no sooner publicly known, than Malachy was restored without any opposition to the throne of Ireland, from which he had been so wrongfully deposed. According to one of the most authentic of the Irish chronicles—that known as the annals of the Four Masters—Malachy virtually assumed the crown by taking the supreme command of the combined army on the field of battle after Murrough had received his mortal wound.

The disastrous consequences of the battle of Clontarf were long remembered by the bards of the north, and no serious attempt was made to renew the invasion. But the Irish Danes appear to have been less dispirited by their defeat, than they were encouraged to renew their depredations by the confusion which the death of so many of its princes had carried into the councils of the king of Munster. The year after the battle, king Malachy returned with a fresh army to chastise the Danes of Dublin, and he took and plundered the city, and burnt the citadel and the houses around it. The next year, however, these Danes renewed their depredations, and entering Hy-Kinsellagh, plundered that district from one extremity to the other; but as they were carrying off the spoils (among which they are said to have been dragging into captivity more than a thousand of the inhabitants) king Malachy, with the southern O'Neils, fell upon them unexpectedly, and defeated them with great slaughter. A very short interval was allowed to pass before the same restless neighbours again called him into the field, for it is recorded that in 1017 he defeated them at a place named Odbha, at or near the modern Dowth; and in the same year, under Sitric of Dublin, they devastated Kildare, Glendalough, Clonard, Swords, and Armagh. About the same time the old alliance between the Danes of Dublin and the people of Leinster was destroyed by the tyrannical overbearance of the former. After the death of Maolmordha at Clontarf, he had been succeeded by his son Brann, who having given some offence to the Danish prince Sitric, the latter treacherously seized upon him in 1018, deprived him of his eyes (the common way at that time of rendering a prince incapable of reigning), and attempted to force a king of his own choice into his place. The people of Leinster resisted, and at length, about two years after, they gained a very

decisive victory over the Danes at a place called Delgany, in Wicklow. During this period the Danes had committed great ravages in different parts. In 1019, they plundered Kells, slew a great number of people in the midst of the church, and carried off great booty and many captives; and in 1021, they plundered the shrine of St. Patrick, at Down. From this time there was long and bitter animosity between them and the people of Leinster.

No remarkable events distinguished the second reign of king Malachy. In more than one instance he was called upon to assert his authority with the sword against the subordinate chiefs, who were no longer curbed by the stern authority of Brian Boru. In 1022, he was again called upon to resist the aggressions of the Danes, and he defeated them, with great slaughter, in the month of July, at a place then called the Yellow Ford, now Athboy. Almost immediately after this battle the king retired from the cares of the world to a small island, called Cro-inis, in Lough Annin in Meath (now Lough Ennell, near Mullingar), where he spent his remaining days in penitence and devotion. One of his last acts was the foundation of a hospital for three hundred orphans. He died on Sunday, the 2nd of September, 1022, in the seventy-third year of his age. On his death, the island fell into a state of such extreme confusion that there was not even a claimant to the crown; and Malachy may be considered as the last king of Ireland whose authority supported the title.

The strength of Ireland, indeed, seemed to have exhausted itself in the plain of Clontarf. Most of the prominent clans had lost their chiefs there, and were divided by rival claimants for the petty sovereignty. Three generations in the succession to the crown of Munster had fallen in that fatal struggle, king Brian, his son Murrough, and his grandson Turlough, and the two sons of Brian who escaped, Teige and Donchad, after stifling the attempt to revive the claim of the Eugénian clan, returned home to dispute their father's throne in a desperate battle, in which some of the remaining chiefs lost their lives. Reconciled, subsequently, through the mediation of the clergy, they shared the crown till the year 1023, when Donchad had his brother murdered, and became sole king of Munster. But Turlough, the son of Teige, was allowed to escape into Connaught, and he subsequently avenged his father by becoming the champion successively of Con-

naught and Leinster in resisting the claims of the crown of Munster to sovereignty over them, both provinces being, by Turlough's victories, exempted from the tribute they had been compelled to pay to Brian Boru. At length, after several disastrous reverses, being finally defeated by his nephew in a great battle at the foot of the Ardagh mountains, in 1063, Donchad resigned to him his crown, and proceeded on a pilgrimage to Rome as an atonement for his sins. He there entered the monastery of St. Stephen, where he died in the year following, it is said, an humble penitent. It was asserted by some, that Donchad had carried with him to Rome the crown of Ireland, that he had there made an offering of it to the pope, and that the Roman pontiff, in later times, grounded on this circumstance a claim of temporal sovereignty over the island.

Of this crown, however, there is no reason to believe that Donchad was ever in possession. Ireland had, in fact, fallen to pieces into a number of petty states, its component parts, who severally acknowledged no superior, except, from time to time, the neighbour to whom the chances of war had given only a momentary superiority. Donchad, as well as his nephew and successor, Turlough, have been received by historians as nominal kings of Ireland, because their power was greater than that of any other chief of their time, but it is doubtful if they were ever acknowledged in that capacity by their contemporaries. Dermot, king of Leinster, the contemporary of the monarch last mentioned, is described as one of the worthiest and most powerful of the Irish princes of his day, and some historians give him the title of king of Ireland.

The Danish settlements in Ireland were now taking their position as small indigenous states, and they began to be acknowledged as standing on the same footing with the petty states whose inhabitants these foreign invaders had so long persecuted. The repeated marauding expeditions of the Irish Danes, indeed, appear to have differed little from the mutual wars which the various Irish clans waged with each other, and they were, at this time perhaps, carried on with not much more ferocity. From a variety of circumstances, however, they have received more notice from the native annalists, who record successive defeats of the Danes by their countrymen, during several years after the death of king Malachy; but these defeats were, in general, mere partial checks on the

incursions of invaders, who remained undisturbed in their own territory, and who, besides other plunder, carried on a considerable traffic with their captives, whom they sold into slavery. The Irish princes of Bregia, and their neighbours, the Danes of Dublin, were alternately allies and enemies, quarrelling with one another, or uniting to plunder the surrounding states. In 1029, Flanagan O'Kelly, prince of Bregia, and Sitric, king of Dublin, went together on a pilgrimage to Rome. The year following, Sitric's son, Anlaf, then king of the Danes, was taken prisoner by Mahon O'Regan, prince of Bregia, who only restored him to liberty on his payment of a ransom of twelve hundred cows, seven score 'British' horses, and sixty ounces of gold, and he demanded the sword of Carolus and sixty ounces of silver as a fee for throwing off his fetters, eighty cows as the price of intercession, and four hostages as a pledge of peace. The Danes of Dublin appear, at this time, to have exacted a tribute from various Irish clans of the northern part of the island, for we are informed, that in addition to these oppressive terms enforced upon Anlaf, he was compelled to give up the hostages of Ireland, both of Leinster and of the Leath-Cuinn. In 1032, the Danes of Dublin plundered Ardraccan, in Meath, and it is recorded that they there burnt two hundred persons in the 'stone' church, and carried off more than two hundred captives, besides a great quantity of cattle, and other booty. Next year, Sitric defeated the Irish in a battle near the mouth of the Boyne. The two or three years following, the Danish colonies appear to have been more or less at hostilities among themselves, arising from domestic sedition, and the ambition of their chiefs, but in 1038 and 1039, we find them again plundering Meath, and ravaging some of the northern parts of the island. The successions of the Danish kings are, at this time, rather confused, on account of the frequent recurrence of the same name, but according to the best account, they were as follows. Sitric III. having gone on a pilgrimage to Rome, in 1030, and dying on the way, was succeeded by his son, Anlaf VI, who also went on a pilgrimage to Rome, in 1034, and was slain in his way through England. He was succeeded by his son, Sitric IV. It was this prince who, in conjunction with a Danish bishop of Dublin, named Donatus, founded and endowed the cathedral of Christ Church in that city. This Sitric, dying in

1042, was succeeded by his son, Anlaf VII. During the reign of the fourth Sitric, the government of Dublin appears to have been seized more than once by usurpers; for we are told in some of the Irish annals, that, in 1035, during the king's temporary absence, a chief named Emeric seized upon the sovereignty, who was succeeded, it appears, by another usurper, Ivar the son of Harold. Other revolutions must have followed the accession of the legitimate king, Anlaf VII; as, in 1046, we find Ivar son of Harold, at the head of the Danes of Dublin, ravaging the coast of Antrim; and it is recorded in the year following, that this same Ivar was expelled from Dublin by the Danes, and that he was succeeded by Emeric the son of Reginald. These revolutions were, perhaps, assisted by the presence of foreign Danes, for we read, in the northern Sagas, of various expeditions to Ireland about this time. They afforded an opportunity to the native Irish princes of Leinster to interfere, and we learn that, in 1052 or 1053, Dermot mac Maolnambo, king of Leinster, led an army to Dublin, and after ravaging the surrounding country, defeated the Danes in a great battle, and made himself master of the city. He then deliberately expelled Emeric the son of Reginald, and assumed himself the title of king of the Danes. He was, in his turn, expelled by a Danish sea-king, named Godred Crovan, who had made himself master of the Isle of Man in 1056, and sailing to the Irish coast with a powerful fleet, took Dublin, and reduced a great part of Leinster in 1068. His reign in Ireland must have been short, for, in 1072, Dermot mac Maolnambo, who is entitled "king of Leinster and the Leath Mogha, and of the Danes of Dublin," was defeated and slain by Conor O'Melaghlin, king of Meath, in a battle at Odbha, or Dowth; and various other Irish chiefs are mentioned as claiming the title of king of Dublin.

The temporary sovereignty of the Danes in England, under Cnut and Hardacnut, had, no doubt, led to a more intimate and frequent intercourse between the Irish Danes and their kinsmen in the sister island. In the internal wars of the earlier half of the eleventh century, the Danes of Dublin, and their Irish allies, seem to have joined frequently in plundering the west of England and the districts bordering on the Severn and the Dee; and they probably carried on a lucrative traffic by selling Irish captives into slavery in England, and carrying away

English slaves to Ireland. This intercourse became most intimate with the Welsh of Cornwall and Wales. Conan ap Jago, prince of North Wales, married Ranulpha, daughter of Anlaf, king of Dublin; and when he was expelled from Wales by an usurper, Gryffyth ap Llewellyn, he took refuge in Ireland. His father-in-law, Anlaf, raised an army, and returned with him to Wales, about the year 1045, where they defeated Gryffyth, and took him prisoner, but he was soon afterwards rescued by his own men, and Anlaf and Conan were defeated, with great slaughter, and compelled to return to Dublin. Between this and 1060, various expeditions of the Irish Danes into Wales are recorded. One of these took place in 1055, when, according to the Northern Saga, a famous Norwegian earl, named Guthorm, or Gorm, led a strong party of his countrymen to Dublin, and there, allying himself with king Murrough, they sailed together to Wales with a large fleet, and, having plundered the country, carried back an immense quantity of silver and other booty; but, afterwards, quarrelling about the division of the spoils, they fought with each other, and Murrough was defeated by his northern ally. The latter, we are told, took home such a quantity of silver, that he made with the tithe of it a solid image of Christ, seven feet high, and offered it in the church of St. Olaf on his return to Norway.

Various incidents mentioned in English history show that at this period the relations of the Anglo-Saxons with Ireland were also intimate. Donchad, king of Munster, had for his second wife Driella, the daughter of the English earl Godwin, and sister of Harold. When the family of Godwin were banished by king Edward, Harold and his younger brother Leofwine, took refuge in Ireland, and remained there during the winter "with the king's protection," to use the words of the Saxon chronicle; but whether this were the king of Munster, or the king of Dublin, is not quite clear. The year following Harold returned to the English coast with a fleet, entered the Severn, and ravaged Somerset and Devonshire, and proceeded thence to join his father at the Isle of Wight. The Saxon chronicle informs us that about the same period thirty-six ships came from Ireland to Wales, and joined the Welsh prince Gryffyth in plundering the borders. Two or three years later, in 1055, when Elgar, the son of earl Leofric was outlawed, he went to Ireland and

there procured a fleet of eighteen ships, with which, and with his own followers, he returned to Wales and joined himself with the restless prince Gryffyth; the Irish and Welsh then invaded Herefordshire, and defeated king Edward's Norman earl Ralf.

But it is to the traditionary history and the romance of the age that we must again turn for the clearest picture of the intercourse between the two islands in the later years of Anglo-Saxon rule. According to the half historical and half romantic life of the Saxon Hereward,* when that hero was banished from his father's home, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, he first sought refuge at the court of an independent Cornish chief, from whom he subsequently carried tokens of remembrance and recommendation to a king in Ireland, and to the prince his son. Soon after his arrival Hereward was joined by two of his kinsmen, who brought him intelligence of his father's death, but he remained to assist the king at whose court he was living, in a war against another Irish king, in which he signalized himself by his daring exploits. After the conclusion of this war, Hereward is made to join with the Irish prince in a predatory descent on the coast of Cornwall, in the course of which he carried away the daughter of the Cornish chief, and delivered her to the Irish prince who sought her in marriage. Hereward returned with the expedition to Ireland, and he was there furnished with two good ships to return to his native country. In the Anglo-Norman romance of Horn, the hero is similarly banished from the English court and takes refuge in Ireland, at the court of a king named Godreche; he was there when a party of Saracens (the romance name for Danes) invaded the country, and he signalized himself in the war against them. A messenger subsequently arrives at the court of Godreche to recall Horn to his native land, which was torn by sedition. In one of the early English versions of this romance, the scene is laid in Northumbria, which is invaded by the Danes from Ireland. Horn's father Hatheolf is represented as the king of Northumbria, and assembling his host he engages the Irish army on Stainsmoor, defeats it with great slaughter, and kills two Irish kings. After the departure of their invaders, Horn went into Wales to the court of king Elidan. A

* First published, by the author of the present history, in the "Chroniques Anglo-Normandes," edited at Rouen, by M. Michel.

king in Ireland, here named Finlak, and represented as the son (son-in-law?) of the Welsh prince, sends to the Welsh court for aid in his war against the Irish Danes, and Horn proceeds to Ireland and takes an active part in the Irish war. Even stories like these have their importance, for they

show strong traditions which, from their resemblance to the transactions which we know from history did take place, prove that such transactions were of common occurrence, and their importance caused them to be long remembered.

CHAPTER VIII.

IRELAND IN THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES.



PREVIOUS to the death of king Dermot, which left Turlough, the nephew of Donchad, (in whom the fortunes of Munster again raised their head), supreme king of Ireland, England had changed its dynasty again, and William the Norman now sat on the throne, while Lanfranc, the ecclesiastic, ruled the see of Canterbury. The Anglo-Normans soon begun to take a more decided interest in the domestic transactions of the sister isle than the Anglo-Saxons had done, which was shown more especially in the intercourse between the two churches. This intercourse was promoted by the elevation of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick, into episcopal sees, and the circumstance that the Dano-Irish bishops acknowledged subjection to the English metropolitan see of Canterbury. It has often been a matter of dispute whether at this time the Irish church submitted to the direct authority of Rome, and it was accused of having allowed many irregularities to creep into its discipline, if not into its doctrines. These were the subject of not unfrequent exhortations from Lanfranc, Anselm, and St. Bernard. The former, addressing Turlough (whom he calls in his Latin *Terdevalchus*) as supreme king of Ireland, complains principally of the loose observation of marriage throughout Ireland, men quitting without any canonical cause their rightful wives, and taking others without regard to the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, marrying sometimes women who had in the same manner been deserted by their husbands; and of the prevalence of the practice among the bishops of selling holy

orders for money. Pope Gregory VII. wrote to the same king in a similar strain, and hinted at the double claim of the successor of St. Peter to dispose of the temporal and spiritual sovereignty of the island. Lanfranc urged upon the king the necessity of calling a general council of the clergy of Ireland to consult on a remedy against the growing evils of which he complained. St. Bernard describes the Irish in exaggerated language as little better than savages, as living in almost promiscuous concubinage, and as delighting in nothing but rapine and slaughter. Two great ecclesiastical synods were at length held in the year 1111,—the first at Fiodh-Ængusa, or Ængus's Grove, near the hill of Usneach, which was attended by the king and an immense body of the clergy,—the other at a place called Rath-Breasail. Of the acts of the first of these synods we are left in entire ignorance; the latter was chiefly occupied in arranging the ecclesiastical dioceses of the island, and restricting the number of the bishops, for the ecclesiastical chiefs seem previously to have been almost as numerous as the turbulent heads of clans who set up for independent sovereigns. By the resolutions of the synod of Rath-Breasail, there were to be (exclusive of Dublin, which was left subject to the see of Canterbury) twelve dioceses in the northern division of the island (the *Leath-Cuinn*) subject to the archbishop of Armagh, and twelve in the southern division (*Leath-Mogha*) subject to the archbishop of Cashel. This division of sees appears to have been only partially carried into effect. Gillibert, bishop of Limerick, who presided over the council, was the first apostolic legate in Ireland.

We have scarcely any notice of the transactions of the earlier Anglo-Norman kings with the Irish. William Rufus is said to

have sent an embassy to king Turlough, to request that he would furnish him with Irish oak for the roof of his palace of Westminster, trusting in its old reputation as an antidote against reptiles and everything venomous or poisonous, and it was pretended long after that no spider had ever been seen to make its web in the timbers of the roof of Westminster Hall. The succeeding king, Murkertach, married his daughter to Arnulf de Montgomery, earl of Pembroke, and assisted that nobleman and his brother Robert de Belesme in their rebellion against Henry I. That the Norman conqueror had designs on the independence of Ireland, we gather from an obscure phrase in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, which tells us that "had he lived two years longer, he would have subdued Ireland by his 'prowess' (or by the terror of his name), and that without a battle." And William of Malmesbury, in the earlier half of the twelfth century, summing up the character of Henry I. of England, gives us a curious glimpse at the condition of Ireland under Murkertach, and makes us acquainted with the important fact that many English and Normans had already settled in its commercial cities. "Murcard, king of Ireland, and his successors," he says, "were so devotedly attached to our Henry, that they wrote no letter but such as tended to soothe him, and did nothing contrary to his commands; although it may be observed that Murcard, from some unknown cause, (perhaps arising from some of his transactions with earl Arnulf) acted for a short time rather superciliously towards the English; but soon after, on the suspension of navigation and of foreign trade, his insolence subsided. For of what value could Ireland be if deprived of the merchandize of England? From poverty, or rather from the ignorance of the cultivators, the soil, unproductive of every good, engenders outside the cities a rustic and wretched swarm of natives; but the English and French inhabit the cities in a greater degree of civilization through their mercantile traffic."*

A century, indeed, of turbulent independence from foreign rule was enjoyed (if it can be called enjoying) by the people of Ireland after the period of the establishment of the Normans in England; but the annals of this period offer little more than an uninterrupted succession of sanguinary feuds, petty aggressions on each other's territory, battles, and

murders, of which the chroniclers set down the simple facts with all imaginable gravity. The wars most frequently recorded, and which, perhaps, had the greatest influence on the future fortunes of Ireland, were those between the native chiefs and the Danish settlements, which, though always regarded as establishments of foreigners, were now considered as an integral and necessary part of the Irish monarchy. When, after his accession to the throne of Ireland, in 1072, Turlough, king of Munster, marched in person to take the homage of the various subordinate chiefs (which was refused only in Ulster), he was received in Dublin with open gates, and the Danish king, Godfred Meranagh (or Godfred IV.), acknowledged him as his liege lord. Yet three years had hardly passed when, in 1075, for some cause which is not stated, the king of Ireland sent his son Murkertach, then king of Thomond, against Dublin, which was surrendered to him, and he deposed and banished king Godfred, and assumed the throne in his place. He seems to have remained in possession without any serious interruption, till 1085, although it is said that the Danes persisted in looking on the absent Godfred as their legitimate king. It was not till 1082 that king Turlough reduced the princes of Ulster to obedience. Four years after, in the month of July, 1086, Turlough died, and his kingdom of Munster was divided between his three sons, Teige, Murkertach, and Dermot. Before the year was ended, Teige, the eldest, died, and then Murkertach, having banished his younger brother Dermot, took sole possession of the throne of Munster, and laid claim to that of Ireland.

This claim was resisted by the chiefs of the other provinces, who took up the cause of his brother Dermot, and united under the banner of Domnal mac Lochlin, prince of Alichia, who, as the head and representative of the ancient royal line of the northern O'Niels, set up a rival claim to the sovereignty of Ireland. From 1088 to 1090, the war between these two pretenders filled the island with desolation, the territories of each, in turn, becoming the scene of the other's vengeance. Godfred had recovered the throne of Dublin, and he willingly joined in the war against his ancient enemy; and while Domnal was ravaging the plains of Munster, and, among other acts of spoliation, destroyed the royal palace of Kinkora, the Danes of Dublin, Wexford, and Waterford, made an irruption into the district of Cork, and would

* Sax. Chron. A.D. 1087, W. Malmesb. Hist. Reg. Angl. lib. v. p. 161.

have plundered that city had they not met with an unexpected defeat in a sudden attack from the people of Iveagh. Murkertach retaliated on both by carrying a numerous army up the Shannon, with which he ravaged the shores of the river and the lakes, sparing not even the churches and sacred edifices, and then, marching into Leinster, he made himself again master of Dublin, and compelled Godfred, a second time, to fly from his kingdom. These events occurred in the year 1088, and it was not until they had alternately laid waste each other's dominions during two years, that, in 1090, a conciliation was effected between the two monarchs on the condition, so often made between their predecessors, that each should retain the absolute power over his own half of the island, while the assembled monarchs—they were, besides the two kings more especially concerned, Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, and Maoleachlan, king of Meath—acknowledged Domnal's claim to supremacy over the island. Next year, however, the rivalry of the two princes again broke out in open warfare, and then Murkertach was acknowledged as king of Ireland; but the struggle between the two families of the O'Niels and the O'Brians was continued, with little intermission, the next eight-and-twenty years, during which period most of the petty chieftains of the different states followed the example of their superiors in pursuing their private feuds with sword and fire.

During this period the Danes also were not idle. Previous to the year 1095, when Godfred, king of Dublin, died in exile, Murkertach had again, on two successive occasions, marched to Dublin, and driven him from his throne; and, on the latter occasion, he made his own son, Donal, king of the Irish Danes. A dreadful pestilence, added to the calamities of the Irish, is said to have carried off, in the year last mentioned, one fourth of the population of the island. Godfred, king of Dublin, was one of its victims. The reputation of Murkertach had now risen so highly, that the chiefs of the Isle of Man sent an embassy to request that he would send one of his family to be their king, and he appointed his nephew, also named Donal, the son of the banished Teige, to rule them, but they were soon disgusted with his tyranny, and expelled him from the island. His cousin Donal is said to have reigned over the Danes of Dublin till the year 1118,

when he resigned the sceptre, and retired to a monastery.

If Murkertach did little to promote ecclesiastical reform, he was celebrated far and wide as the staunch friend and patron of the church. On more than one occasion he had allowed his angry feelings against his political rivals to be pacified by the intermediation of his ecclesiastics; and once, when in 1099 he had marched into Ulster, and his own forces and those of the O'Niels of that province were on the point of engaging, the voice of the archbishop of Armagh, interposed between the two armies, hindered the engagement. His love to the church was crowned in 1101 by the magnificent grant of the royal city of Cashel, which he solemnly dedicated to God and St. Patrick.

Immediately after this act of munificence towards the church, Murkertach proceeded on an expedition against his rival, Domnal mae Lochlin, and carrying his depredations into the heart of Ulster, he penetrated to the coast of Donegal, and there destroyed the palace of the O'Niels of the north, so well known by its name of Aileach (the eagle's nest), or Alichia, given to it on account of its position on the summit of a small mountain in the peninsula of Inisowen. To mark more strongly this act of vengeful retaliation for the destruction of his own palace of Kinkora twenty years before, the king of Munster razed the palace of Alichia to the ground, and ordered his soldiers to carry away the materials, stone by stone, to Limerick.

About this period, or within a year or two of it, the kingdom of Murkertach was threatened by a new and formidable invasion of the Danes. In 1098, Magnus, king of Norway, obtained the sovereignty of the Orkneys, the Hebrides, and the Isle of Man, and his enterprising ambition soon led him to aim at adding Ireland to his already extensive dominions. In 1102, according to the Irish chronicles, Magnus, having wintered in the western isles, landed with a considerable army at Dublin, and he was there met by king Murkertach. To judge from the silence of the annalists, there were no hostilities; but the conference ended in a pacific arrangement, in accordance with which the daughter of Murkertach (named in the Irish accounts Beblinn) was given in marriage to Sigurd, the son of Magnus, who, at the same time, received from his new ally many rich and costly gifts. Magnus made his son king

of the isles, and then returned to his own dominions in the north.

This alliance appears to have been part of the design of promoting ultimately a Scandinavian prince to the crown of Ireland. But in the year following, we are informed that the Irish king violated his engagements, upon which Magnus caused his daughter to be sent home insultingly, and himself with a powerful army landed on the Irish shore, with the avowed object of conquering the island. Some of the chronicles state that, immediately after landing, the northern king dispatched an envoy to Murkertach with a pair of his shoes and a scornful message, commanding him to carry the shoes on his shoulders in his own court on Christmas-day, as a token of his subjection and homage. The Irish are said to have resisted the invaders strenuously, but with little success, until the latter, after having overrun some of the richest portions of the island, lost their chief in a skirmish with the warlike inhabitants of Ulster. The account of this battle given by the early northern writers affords a curious picture of Irish warfare in this age.

Magnus, we are told, after having made a successful demonstration of his strength, entered into a truce with the people of Ulster, one article of which was, that they should furnish him with a large supply of cattle for his fleet, which was then stationed on the coast of Down. The time appointed for the delivery of the cattle was the 23rd of August, the eve of St. Bartholomew's day; but as that day passed over without the fulfilment of this part of the agreement, next morning Magnus landed, with a portion of his forces, to look after the missing cattle and their drovers. The country bordering on this part of the coast is said to have been of a very impracticable character, covered with forests and morasses, and the Irish had concealed themselves in the woods in large numbers, with the design of inveigling their invaders, in search of the cattle, into a place where they might be attacked with advantage, and cut off from their ships. It was a bright day in August, and the Danes had laboured all the morning in the heat of the sun, cutting down timber, and making roads and bridges to pass the marshes, when at length they reached a hill of sufficient elevation to afford an extensive prospect. They saw in the distance a cloud of dust, and they were alarmed with the apprehension of an attack from the enemy, but when it approached nearer, it turned out to be the pro-

mised supply of cattle, which was delivered peacefully into their hands by the drovers. Deceived by the absence of all signs of hostility, the Danes began their march back about mid-day, and proceeded carelessly, without any apprehension of danger, till they came to the marshes which had already caused them so much embarrassment. It was at this moment that the Irish suddenly poured out from the woods on every side, with their terrible shouts, and threw the invaders into confusion. Magnus ordered his chief commander, Eyvinder, to sound the trumpet which was to summon all his men to the royal standard, that his warriors might close their ranks with serried shields, until they passed the swamps, and arrived at the plains where they would be safe. But it was difficult to obey their orders, and multitudes fell by the overwhelming hordes of assailants, before Magnus, and as many of his men as he could keep together, reached an old fort or entrenchment, fiercely pursued by the Irish. Here the Danes made a stand, and their king seeing a Swedish chieftain, named Thorgrim, called to him in haste, "Do you, with your troop, cross the rampart, and we will defend you as you go; when you have passed it, occupy the opposite hill, and, with your best archers, gall the enemy, until we have passed also." Thorgrim, and his followers, crossed the foss, but, instead of occupying the hill, they placed their shields on their backs, and fled towards the ships. When the king perceived their treachery, he exclaimed, "Is it thus you fly, you coward? I was a fool to prefer you to command instead of Sigurd the swiftfooted, who would not thus desert me." Magnus now continued the fight with great valour, and to encourage his small body of men, he exposed his person to every danger. While defending himself against a crowd of assailants, he was transfixes by a javelin through both thighs, a little above the knees; but he drew the weapon out with his own hands, broke it beneath his feet, and continued the combat, exclaiming, "Thus we young warriors can break these twigs; fight on bravely, my men, and fear no danger for me!" Soon after this, an Irish battle-axe struck the Danish king on the neck, and felled him to the ground. Most of the chiefs who had gone out with him that fatal morning, and a large portion of his men, were already slain; and the rest, when they saw their king fall, turned from the battle, and some succeeded in escaping to their

ships. One brave warrior, named Vidkunner, remained to defend the body of his chief, slew the man who had given the mortal blow, and, at last, effected his retreat to the fleet, carrying off with him the royal standard, and the king's sword, which was renowned for its sharpness, and bore the name of Legbitir, or the Limb-cutter. This celebrated sword is described in the Sagas as having its hilt of ivory, the handle ornamented with twisted gold. King Magnus was in his fortieth year, and is represented as a man of handsome form, and of great strength. His body is said to have been carried for interment to the cathedral of St. Patrick, at Down; near which, at a place called Moycoba, this battle was fought. When the death of Magnus was publicly known, the northern ships left Ireland in confusion, and returned home.

The Danes had experienced this defeat not from Murkertach, but from the Irish of that province which was most devoted to his rival mac Lochlin; and after the departure of the foreigners the two enemies at home were almost immediately involved in hostilities. Perhaps the king of Munster imagined that the power of Ulster had been weakened by its struggle to resist the Northmen, or he may have been provoked by the high tone of his rival, exulting that the Danes had been driven away by the Irish under his rule; it is certain that in 1103 Murkertach invaded that province, and, unadvisedly, detaching a portion of his army to lay waste the district of Dalaradia, he rashly advanced with the rest into the heart of Tyrone, where he was attacked and totally defeated in a sanguinary battle at a place called Cobha. The victorious O'Niels carried away among their booty the royal pavilion and standards of the king of Munster, rich stores of pearls,* and other precious treasures. Murkertach never recovered entirely from the effects of this defeat. After a few more years of restlessness, during which he found occupation in petty acts of turbulence less worthy of a place in history, he was seized in 1114 with a violent illness which rendered him incapable of managing the affairs of his kingdom, and his brother Dermot took advantage of his weakness to seize upon the crown. The

Munster annalist laments "the many and great calamities, the battles and deeds of guilt, the devastations and massacres, the violations of churches and of the sanctuaries of the saints of Erin," which marked the period of Murkertach's illness. In 1115, feeling his disorder gain upon him, he quietly resigned the sceptre into Dermot's hands, and retired to the monastery of Lismore, where he took holy orders, and, after four years of penitence and devotion, he died there in 1119, and was buried in the church of Killaloe. Domnal mac Lochlin followed the example of his old rival, and retired towards the end of his life to the monastery of Derry, where he died in 1121.

After the death of these princes there was no acknowledged monarch for a period of fifteen years, during which the island was again torn by the conflicts of various claimants. During the few previous years, another Irish prince had been pushing himself into notice by the unscrupulous boldness of his enterprises. This was Turlough O'Connor, king of Connaught, who had in 1118 invaded Leinster, and marched his army to the walls of Dublin, where he defeated the Danes, and not only carried off all their hostages but proclaimed himself their king, and held the government, at least nominally, for several years. Various Danish princes from the islands, from time to time, made their appearance in Dublin, and were received as kings by their countrymen, but their rule appears to have been either of very short duration, or to have lasted merely by the forbearance of the O'Connor. The latter was again obliged to march to Dublin with an army in 1126, when he appointed his son Connor O'Connor king of Dublin and Leinster, but in a few months a rebellion of his Danish subjects compelled this prince to fly from his throne.

The ambition of the king of Connaught was now absorbed in higher projects, for he stood forward as at least the boldest of the candidates for the crown of Ireland. Turlough O'Connor met with little effectual opposition to his ambitious views from the O'Niels of the north, but a more formidable obstacle presented itself in the still active power of Munster, now wielded by a prince of courage and talent not unworthy to sit on the throne of Brian Boru. Connor O'Brian had succeeded Dermot on the throne of Munster in 1120, and he now revived the claim of his race to the monarchy. After the year 1130, the struggle became more

* Ireland was at this time celebrated for its pearls, the finest of which were procured from the lake of Killarney. Gillibert, bishop of Limerick, in one of his letters to Anselm of Canterbury, sends him a present of twenty-five pearls. Valuable pearls have been obtained from the lake of Killarney in much more recent times.

open and violent, and in two successive years, 1132 and 1133, the king of Munster invaded Connaught, and signally defeated Turlough in his own dominions. When a third time, after having defeated the Danes of Dublin and the king of Leinster, who had taken advantage of the general confusion to fly to arms, he invaded the dominions of the king of Connaught, the clergy interfered, and with difficulty effected a reconciliation between the two princes. We are ignorant of the terms of this reconciliation, but they appear to have been advantageous to the king of Munster, who assumed the dignity of monarch of Ireland in 1136. Perhaps O'Brian was called home by the domestic troubles of his own hereditary kingdom, for long jealousy had existed between the two great clans of the Eugenians and the Dalcassians, since the succession to the throne had been usurped solely by the latter, and O'Connor's emissaries had fanned this jealousy in the clan of the Eugenians into open disaffection. Wearied with these feuds and contentions, the king of Munster at length resigned the sceptre, and retired to lead a monastic life at Killaloe, where he died, and was buried with his forefathers in the cathedral. His successor on the throne of Munster was his son Turlough O'Brian.

Under this new prince of the Dalcassian family of the O'Brians, the jealousy of the Eugenians, still fomented by the king of Connaught, broke out anew, and with more fatal consequences. The king of Munster, refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of O'Connor as king of Ireland, hostilities between Connaught and Munster recommenced, and O'Connor openly taking part with the Eugenians, they deserted from the standard of Munster under two of their princes, and joined themselves with the king of Connaught. In the course of these feuds, Roderic, O'Connor's son, entered Munster at the head of a chosen body of his father's people, and, falling upon Kinkora by surprise, again burnt to the ground the favourite palace of the O'Brian princes. The king of Munster now collected together his whole strength to avenge the insult, but weakened by the defection of the Eugenians, and attacked by the whole power of the king of Ireland, he was totally defeated in the great and sanguinary battle of Moinmor, between Cork and the Blackwater, in 1151, in which his son the prince of Thomond and the chief of the Dalcassians were slain. After this victory the king of Ireland took posses-

sion of the whole of Munster, divided it into two provinces, and placed as rulers over them the two Eugénian princes whose treason towards their liege lord had ensured him the conquest.

But while Turlough O'Connor was thus crushing the long rivalry of the province of Munster, a new and formidable opponent arose in Ulster, the chief ruler of which, and the representative of the royal house of the O'Niels of the north, Murtogh O'Lochlin, king of Tyrone, not only publicly espoused the cause of the king of Munster, but openly revived the ancient claim of the family of Nial of the Nine Hostages to the monarchy of Ireland. It was at his court that the exiled king of Munster found an asylum; and, having induced the various princes of Leinster to join in a league, he took the field at the head of a powerful army, and marching southward through Meath, defeated O'Connor in battle, and restored Turlough O'Brian to a large portion, if not to the whole, of his kingdom. O'Connor prepared in all haste to repress this daring attack upon his supremacy, and collected his forces both by land and by sea, for the kings of Connaught now possessed a strong fleet on the western coast of Ireland. To meet the latter, which was soon occupied in ravaging the coasts of Tyrconnel, Murtogh O'Lochlin had entered into a confederacy with the Danes of the islands, who came to his aid with a multitude of ships, but they were defeated in an obstinate naval engagement. The war between Connaught and Ulster continued to be carried on with vigour, and the former had regained much of its superiority over the province of Munster, when on the 19th of May, 1156, Turlough O'Connor, whom the native annalists call Turlough the Great, and celebrate for his magnificence as the Augustus of Western Europe, died at Dunmore, in Galway. He was buried, according to his will, on the north side of the great altar in the cathedral of St. Ciaran, at Clonmacnois, and gained the gratitude of the ecclesiastical historians by his munificent bequests to that church. He was succeeded on the throne of Connaught by his son Roderic O'Connor.

On the death of Turlough O'Connor, the monarchy of Ireland was at once assumed by his rival Murtogh O'Lochlin, king of Ulster, who, after a struggle against the new king of Connaught, carried on without much activity during two or three years, was universally acknowledged as king of Ireland in 1161. His reign, however, was

not a long one; for he had no sooner relieved himself from all competition for the crown of Ireland than he became engaged in feuds with his subordinate chieftains. In 1165, one of these, Eochad king of Ulidia, in revenge for some injuries he had received from king Murtogh, invaded the royal territory of Dalaradia, and plundered it with great ferocity. The king retaliated by invading and laying waste the whole of Ulidia, and carrying king Eochad and his chief nobles into captivity. By the mediation of the church, Eochad was soon afterwards released and restored to his kingdom, and the chiefs of Ulidia were also set at liberty, though they were compelled to leave their children in the hands of king Murtogh as hostages. Next year, however, Murtogh appears suddenly to have repented of this act of half clemency, and he seized treacherously upon the king of Ulidia, and deprived him of his eyes. This unprovoked outrage, joined with some other acts of violence, raised the indignation of several of the other chiefs of the north; and the prince of Orgial, who felt aggrieved as one of those who had guaranteed the treaty, raised an army and entered into a confederacy for the purpose of taking revenge. Having joined his own forces with those of Hy-Bruin and Conmaene, he suddenly fell upon the monarch as he was passing, with a comparatively small number of troops, over a wild tract in the neighbourhood of Lough Neagh, then called Litterluin, now the Fews, and slew him with the greater part of his nobility. The supremacy now reverted to the house of O'Connor, and Roderic, king of Connaught, was acknowledged king of Ireland without opposition.

During these repeated contests for the crown of Ireland, the Danish population had not been inactive; but their feuds and inroads, destructive as they were, dwindle into insignificance beside the more wholesale devastation committed by the great Irish chieftains.* About the year 1135, the Danes of Dublin rebelled against Murrough mac Murrough, king of Leinster, who had ruled over them rather tyrannically, and sent for Godred, king of Man, who came into the bay of Dublin with a fleet,

and was received as their king. The king of Leinster, we are told, raised an army to re-assert his authority, and, while he encamped himself at a place called by the annalist of the Isle of Man 'Corsehelis' (perhaps Carlow), he detached a large body under O'Siblen, prince of Offaly, to Dublin, where the Irish were defeated with great loss by the new king, and O'Siblen himself was slain. It appears that soon afterwards Godred returned to the Isle of Man, and that this was brought about or followed by a reconciliation between the Danes and their old lord, Murrough mac Murrough, the insincerity of which was proved by the events of the following year. The Danes of Dublin then invited their Irish king to a banquet, at which they treacherously fell upon Murrough while unarmed, and slew him, and then scornfully buried him along with a dog. This is said to have occurred about the year 1140. Hostilities had during several previous years been carried on not only between the Danes and the Irish, but among the Danes themselves. In 1140, the Danes of Waterford were defeated in a battle with their brethren of Dublin. In 1141, we learn that Connor O'Brian, the prince of Thomond, led his forces to Dublin, and was received by the Danes as their king. Soon after this, a Danish chief from the Hebrides, named Oittir, came with a fleet to Ireland, occupied Dublin (probably by the connivance of its inhabitants), and plundered Kells. He seems to have been replaced by a native Danish prince, Reginald II., who was slain in a battle against the men of East Meath, in 1146; on which Oittir was again received as king of Dublin, but he was killed, in 1148, by the sons of Mae Thorkil. The year before his death, king Oittir had led a large body of the Danes of Dublin and the Irish of Leinster into Wales, to take part in the domestic feuds of that country, but, being defeated by the Welsh prince, Owen Gwynneth, they returned to Ireland with disgrace. In 1149, Dermot mac Murrough, son of the murdered Murrough mac Murrough, was king of Leinster and of the Danes of Dublin, and he warred upon and plundered his neighbours with an army composed of his subjects of both races, during this and some following years. There seems still to have been, at the same time, kings of Dublin of Danish race, who, perhaps, did homage to the king of Leinster as their superior lord; for, in 1160, we are informed that Brodar, the son of Thorkil, king of the

* Much of our information relating to the history of the Irish Danes at this period is furnished by the chronicles of the Isle of Man, where, from the intimate connection between the Manx and the Danes of Dublin, the transactions in Ireland were a subject of great interest.

Danes of Dublin, was slain in a battle with the men of South Bregia, and yet, the next year, when Murtogh O'Lochlin, king of Ulster, went in force to exact the submission of the Danes, it was made by king Dermod, who did homage for Dublin and for Leinster. In this last year, Murrough's son, Donald Kavenagh, is said to have defeated the Danes of Wexford, with the assistance of the men of Hy-Kinsellagh. In 1162, the king of Ulster was obliged again to go with an army to exact the submission of the Danes of Dublin.

One of the first acts of Roderic O'Connor, as soon as, in 1166, he was acknowledged king of Ireland by the Irish population of the island in general, was to march with a sufficient force to secure the allegiance of the turbulent Dano-Irish subjects of the city of Dublin; and he was so well satisfied with their behaviour on this occasion, that he gave them four thousand oxen as an acknowledgment. A large body of the Danes joined the Irish army, and accompanied the king a considerable distance on his progress to receive the homage of the princes of the northern part of the island.

Among the princes who bowed to the supremacy of king Roderic, two hold a prominent place from the parts they severally acted in the events of the period we are now approaching. These were Teighernan or Tiernan O'Ruarc, the prince of Breffny, a territory in the eastern part of Connaught, and, therefore, more immediately attached to the crown of the O'Connors, and Dermod mac Murrough, king of Leinster. A feud, of long duration, existed between these two princes, embittered by their alternate triumphs, as the power of the O'Connors or that of the O'Niels became ascendant; for it was always under cover of the great feuds of the powerful houses that the petty feuds of the lesser chieftains were carried on with impunity. An incident of a romantic nature characterized the earlier period of the feud between the two princes alluded to. Tiernan O'Ruarc had married Dervorgilla, daughter of Murtough O'Melaghlin, king of Meath; it is said that an attachment had existed between the lady and king Dermod before her marriage; and after a short period, she determined to leave her husband, and throw herself into the arms of her paramour. In the year 1153, O'Ruarc, preparing to depart on one of his military expeditions, sent his wife to an island in Meath, as a place of security during

his absence, and this was the moment she chose for putting her design into execution. She sent a private message to the king of Leinster, to give him information of the place of her concealment, and with the assistance of her brother Melaghlin, who was a party to the conspiracy, Dermod went secretly, with a small escort, and carried her away.

The prince of Breffny applied for redress to Turlough O'Connor, not only as the monarch of Ireland, and, therefore, the sovereign judge between the subordinate princes, but as his own liege lord, as king of Connaught, and Turlough marched an army into Leinster the year following, rescued the lady Dervorgilla from the hands of the ravisher, placed her under the protection of her own relatives in the kingdom of Meath, and extorted conditions from king Dermod which considerably diminished his power of doing mischief. In 1156, as we have already seen, the power of Ulster became superior to that of Connaught, and Murtough O'Lochlin assumed the crown of Ireland. It was naturally the policy of the new monarch to humble the power of Connaught, and one of his first acts was to enter Leinster with a formidable army for the purpose of restoring Dermod to the full possession of that province. Secure in this powerful protection, the king of Leinster now pursued his old feuds with impunity, and not only persecuted and insulted O'Ruarc, and other chiefs of Connaught and Munster, whose territories lay upon his borders, but provoked the hatred of his own subjects by his tyranny and cruelties. He invaded also the territory of the Danes of Dublin, and is stated, by the old historians, to have ruled over them with greater energy than they had ever previously experienced from the kings of Leinster, whom they acknowledged as their superior lords. The natural consequence was, that when Dermod lost his protector, and another O'Connor wielded the sceptre of Ireland, in the person of king Roderic, the neighbouring chiefs, who had so often experienced the ferocity of his resentment, his own subjects, who hated him for his tyranny, and the Danes, who were weary of their dependence on his will, were all ready to rise up against him.

Roderic O'Connor was by no means deficient in the ferocity of disposition and love of turbulence which seem to have been considered as the virtues of the princes and chieftains of Ireland at this period of political confusion. His father, Turlough, had been compelled for some acts of insubordi-

nation, of which we are now ignorant, to confine him in fetters for a year; and as soon as he ascended the throne, among other acts of similar atrocity, he ordered the eyes of his two brothers to be torn out, in order to render them incapable of becoming competitors for his father's crown. King Roderic lent a willing ear to O'Ruarc's demand of vengeance against his old enemy, and the forces of Breffny, Meath, even the warriors of Leinster, and the Danes of Dublin, all ranged themselves under his banner to make war upon the tyrant. Dermot, deserted by his own vassals, retired to Ferns, his capital, where he was harboured for a short time by the monks of the abbey of St. Mary's; for the only class of his subjects whom the king of Leinster had conciliated were the ecclesiastics, who were attached to him on account of his numerous and munificent religious foundations, of which this abbey was one.* Among the chiefs who confederated with O'Ruarc on this occasion were the king of Ossory, to whom the kingdom of Leinster was promised after the expulsion of Dermot; Melaghlin, king of Meath; Hasculf mac Turkil, the Danish king of Dublin; and one of the chief nobles of Leinster, named by the English historian Murrough O'Brien, in whom the king of Leinster appears to have placed an affectionate confidence, but who now, Judas-like, betrayed his master. Surrounded by his enemies on every side, Dermot attempted to negotiate, but in vain. When all his other friends had deserted him, he still clung to the hope that Murrough O'Brien would return to his allegiance, and

* We now come to a period when a large portion of our information is taken from contemporary English authorities, who were in general well acquainted with the events they relate, although they do not always agree with the accounts given by the Irish annalists. We have an instance in the present case, where the English writers, the chief of whom are Giraldus Cambrensis and the anonymous Anglo-Norman metrical historian, place the rape of Dervorgilla in the year in which Dermot was driven from Ireland, and make it the immediate cause of the war by which he was banished, and they represent him carrying the lady with him to the abbey at Ferns. It is not impossible, however, that during the reign of O'Lochlin he had again obtained possession of Dervorgilla.

therefore he felt the more sensibly his ingratitude. Before deserting his last place of refuge in the city of Ferns, Dermot resolved to make another attempt to obtain an interview with O'Brien, in the hopes of working upon his old sympathies. Disguised in the long robe of a monk, which he had borrowed of the abbot of St. Mary's, and which concealed his head and body, and even his feet, he made his way in safety to the spot where O'Brien was then residing. But the king was unsuccessful in his visit, though he was allowed to return undiscovered. O'Brien refused to hold any parley with him, loaded him with reproaches and threats, and retreated into the woods.

Thus deserted by those in whom he put his trust, with a party at home too insignificant to hold out any hope of making head against his enemies, the king of Leinster escaped privately from Ferns, and reached the coast at a port named by the Anglo-Norman metrical narrator of these events 'Corkeran.' He was attended by one faithful friend named Awelif O'Kinad, and by a number of his followers, and, according to the popular report, he carried with him the fair wife of the prince of Breffny. Embarking immediately in a ship, or according to some accounts in several ships, the whole party sailed over to England with a favourable wind, and arrived safely at Bristol, where the king and his paramour were lodged at St. Austin's, in the house of a rich citizen named Robert Harding, the ancestor of the Fitzhardinges of Berkeley. Here the deposed prince devised his plans of revenge, while his enemies in Ireland pronounced the forfeiture of his kingdom, and placed another member of his family on the throne.*

* The character of Dermot mac Murrough is perhaps blackened by the Irish annalists on account of the disasters which he ultimately brought upon his country. The Anglo-Norman writers of course speak more partially of him, and represent him as having suffered unmerited persecution. It is difficult to form an accurate judgment between the two prejudices of the witnesses, but the character of the king of Leinster was probably no worse than that of most of the turbulent chieftains of his time.

CHAPTER IX.

FIRST INVASION OF IRELAND BY THE ANGLO-NORMANS.



OT many days after his arrival in Bristol, Dermot resolved to place his cause in the hands of the king of England, and he accordingly proceeded through Normandy into Aquitaine, where he found Henry II. occupied in reducing to obedience some of his own refractory barons. The Irish chief laid his case before this monarch, painted to him, in exaggerated colours, the faithlessness and turbulence of his own Irish subjects, who had driven him from his throne to seek assistance as an exile in a foreign land, and offered, if the English king would assist in restoring him to his kingdom, to hold it in future as a fief of the English crown. The king listened to him with complacency, and with some vague promises of future help, sent him back to Bristol, with his royal letters to Robert Harding, his former host, directing him to furnish the refugees with every necessary during their residence there; and, according to Giraldus Cambrensis, the king also gave him letters patent, authorizing any of his subjects to assist him, at their own risk, in recovering his kingdom. Dermot made a stay of nearly a month at Bristol, and then, despairing of any immediate assistance from the king, he proclaimed rewards of extensive possessions in Ireland to all those who would be instrumental in the recovery of his crown, in the hope of thus alluring private adventurers to join his standard. The first person of any consequence whose attention was attracted by the liberality of these promises, was Richard fitz Gilbert, surnamed (like his father) Strongbow, earl of Strigul.*

This earl Richard was descended from a great and noble family, being the son and heir of Gilbert, earl of Pembroke, who was

the grandson of that Richard de Clare who had distinguished himself so highly in the ranks of duke William at the memorable battle of Hastings. He is described by his contemporaries as a man liberal and courteous, ever ready to listen to the counsel of his friends, cautious in the cabinet, but bold and resolute in the field. In time of peace he was distinguished by his gentle bearing, showing more of the freedom of the soldier than of the haughtiness of a chieftain, but in war he laid aside the mere character of the soldier to assume that of the commander, and exhibited less of the indiscriminate daring of the former than of the firm and cool valour of the latter. By some means or other, however, he had, at this period, lost most of his paternal inheritance, and he had been obliged to borrow, probably of the Jews, in order to support his character and rank; so that when king Dermot was seeking private adventurers for the invasion of Leinster, Strongbow was driven, as much by his own limited fortune, and by the clamorous importunities of his creditors, as by his ambition, to listen to his proposals. The Irish king offered him his daughter Eva in marriage, and with her he promised to secure to him the succession of the kingdom after his death; and it was agreed that the earl should sail for Ireland at the first approach of spring.

It was not Strongbow, however, but a band of other noble, though inferior, chiefs, who made the first powerful demonstration in favour of the Irish king, and these were singularly allied in one family connection, by their descent from one remarkable woman. Nesta, the beautiful daughter of Gryffyth ap Rhys, king of South Wales, became the concubine of Henry I. of England, and by him bore a son, named Henry, whose sons were Meiler fitz Henry and Robert fitz Henry. This princess afterwards married Gerald of Windsor, who was constable of Pembroke, and by him she had three sons,—William, who was the father of Raymund le Gros, Maurice fitz Gerald, and David, who was bishop of St. David's at the time of Dermot's visit. Her second

* A portion of the substance of this chapter and the following was originally published by the author of the present work as a separate essay, but it is here revised and rewritten. The original authorities are chiefly the narrative of Giraldus Cambrensis, and the Anglo-Norman metrical history, the latter taken in great part from the oral information furnished by Dermot's own secretary, named Maurice Regan.

husband was Stephen, constable of Aber-teivi or Cardigan, by whom she had Robert fitz Stephen. A daughter of Nesta married a knight of Pembrokeshire, named William de Barri, by whom she had four sons, Robert, Philip, Walter, and Gerald, the latter of whom, better known as Giraldus Cambrensis, was the well known historian who has left us the most important narrative of this Irish expedition.

Having concluded his agreement with the earl, Dermot passed over into Wales, with the intention of embarking at St. David's on his return to Ireland, where he had still a few faithful adherents, and whither he was naturally anxious to return after he had made sure of assistance from England. He was received honourably by the Welsh king, Rhys ap Gryffyth, the brother of Nesta, and by the bishop of St. David's; and, during the few days he remained in this city, he accidentally secured the assistance of some other adventurers, who also engaged to sail over to Ireland early in spring. One of these was Robert fitz Stephen, the son of Nesta, who had been treacherously arrested and imprisoned by his uncle, the Welsh king, because he would not join him in rebellion against the king of England. Such, at least, is the reason assigned by his kinsman, Giraldus. At the intercession of Dermot and Robert's half-brothers, the bishop and Maurice fitz Gerald, it was agreed that the state prisoner should receive his liberty on condition of joining in the Irish expedition in company with Maurice; and it was stipulated that, in return for this service, Dermot should give in fee to the two brothers, the city of Wexford, with the two adjacent 'cantreds' or hundreds. Satisfied with his success in England, the Irish king left St. David's in August, 1168, with a small number of attendants, and arrived safely and secretly at Ferns, where he was concealed during the winter by his old friends the clergy.

According to the account given by the Norman rhymers, Dermot was attended in his voyage by a small party of English, led by a Pembrokeshire knight named Richard fitz Godobert; but finding the number too few to render him any assistance, and too many to escape the notice of his enemies in Ireland, he is said to have dismissed them on his arrival. Yet, very early in the year 1169, having collected together his Irish adherents, with the assistance either of the English and Welsh who had gone over in

the preceding year, or of a new party who had joined him during the winter, Dermot boldly entered the field, and made himself master of that part of his territory called Hy-Kinsellagh. King Roderic, alarmed at the re-appearance of Dermot, joined his own forces with those of Tiernan O'Ruarc, and immediately marched against him; and after a skirmish or two, compelled him to take refuge in an almost inaccessible position in the woods. According to the Irish accounts, which are at this period brief, a son of one of the petty Welsh princes, named by them Gryffyth, was slain in one of these engagements, and they gave him the high-sounding title of "one of the most famous warriors of Britain." In the extremity to which he was now reduced, Dermot was compelled to negotiate; and he agreed to be satisfied with holding a small district in dependence on Roderic O'Connor, giving him hostages for his fidelity, and paying a hundred ounces of gold as a conciliatory gift to his old enemy O'Ruarc.

This convention is not mentioned by the Anglo-Norman writers, and if true, it was evidently only a stratagem to gain time. Dermot had already sent to Wales his secretary, Maurice Regan, to hasten the preparations of Fitz Stephen, and to allure others to his standard by offers of land and money. Robert fitz Stephen had not been idle, and in the month of May, 1169, his little armament of three ships arrived at "the Banne," his force consisting of a hundred and thirty knights, chiefly his own kinsmen and retainers, with sixty other men of arms, and about three hundred chosen Welsh archers on foot. Among the more eminent of his companions in arms were Meiler fitz Henry, Miles fitz David (a son of the bishop of St. David's), and Henry de Montmaurice, a soldier of fortune, who had come on the part of earl Strongbow. The following day, Maurice de Prendergast, who had sailed from Milford Haven with two ships, attended by ten knights and a considerable number of archers, arrived at the same place.

It is by no means a question devoid of interest to identify the spot where these first Anglo-Norman invaders set foot on the soil of Ireland. There is a tradition which places it at a small peninsula or promontory on the coast of Wexford, now called Baganbun, which, consisting altogether of about thirty acres, forms a bold projection towards the Welsh coast. On one side of the greater headland is a lesser promontory stretching

out to the east, about two hundred yards long, and seventy broad, accessible only at its extreme point; behind which rises a lofty insulated rock, forming a breakwater to the surf on the point, and imperfectly joined to the main-land by several smaller rocks which are just seen above water, and are described as forming a kind of causeway to the point of the promontory itself. Here it is pretended that Robert fitz Stephen ran in his ships, mooring them under protection of the larger rock, and landing his men by means of the low ridge. The cut between the last of these rocks, across which he is said to have jumped, is called popularly "Fitz Stephen's Stride." The invaders are supposed to have first occupied the esplanade of the smaller peninsula, where there are still traces of hasty fortifications, which command the approaches and overlook the ground in the vicinity. In the middle of the rude encampment is a space like the foundations of a house, which is popularly called "Fitz Stephen's Tent." Others, however, have been inclined to disbelieve the tradition which made the Anglo-Normans land on the promontory of Bagabun, and they think from the identity of the name and its position with regard to Wexford, that the place now called Bannow, which may, from the known encroachments of the sea on this coast, have formerly been a peninsula, is the Banne of the ancient writers. This peninsular form was Fitz Stephen's principal security, for the Anglo-Norman poem tells us that he merely encamped on the sea-shore.

King Dermot was at Ferns when he received the first intelligence of the arrival of his English allies, and he dispatched his natural son, Donald Kavenagh, to welcome them, and announce that he was on his way to meet them. Many of his friends, who had previously kept themselves aloof, were now encouraged to join his standard, and he brought to "the Banne" a body of five hundred Irish warriors. He remained the first night with Fitz Stephen in his encampment on the beach, and next morning, in fulfilment of his agreement with his new ally, they marched with their little army towards Wexford, which was only about twelve miles distant from the place of landing. The Dano-Irish of this town prided themselves much on their valour and former exploits, and they boldly sallied forth to the number of about two, or according to some accounts three thousand, to meet the enemy. But they were unaccustomed to the sight of

knights mounted and clad in armour; and, after a first view of their assailants, they retired before them, burnt the suburbs of the town, and sheltered themselves behind their walls. These they defended with the greatest bravery. Among the first who mounted to the battlements was Robert de Barri, the elder brother of the historian Giraldus. A large stone, thrown by the besieged, struck him on the helmet with such force that he fell headlong into the foss, and was with difficulty dragged out alive by his companions. Many others of the assailants were severely hurt, and at length Fitz Stephen was compelled to withdraw his men, after losing eighteen, whilst of the besieged only three were slain. The English then hastened to the harbour and burnt the shipping.

The next morning Robert fitz Stephen made deliberate preparations for renewing the attack upon the town in a more effective manner; but it appears that the townsmen had taken counsel together during the night, and they anticipated his movements by sending their hostages and renewing their allegiance to king Dermot. Two bishops, who were present, are said to have been in this case the mediators between Dermot and his revolted subjects. The English immediately entered the town, which, according to the agreement, was delivered with its territory to Fitz Stephen, and the Irish king at the same time granted the two cantreds bordering on the sea between Wexford and Waterford, a tract of country now comprised in the baronies of Forth and Bargie, to Hervy de Montmaurice. After this first success, the confederates proceeded to Ferns, king Dermot's capital, where they remained three weeks without entering upon any further enterprise.

King Roderic appears to have been perfectly ignorant of Dermot's proceedings in England, and taken by surprise with this alarming invasion, he, with a culpable negligence, allowed the evil time to gather head, instead of proceeding to crush it at its first appearance. The fall of Wexford had strengthened Dermot's party in Ireland, simply because it exhibited energy and strength; some turned to what appeared suddenly a thriving cause; while, with the predatory habits to which the Irish had been so long inured, the hope of plunder attracted many; and the king of Leinster now found himself in his own kingdom, with an army of three thousand Irish at his command, in

addition to his English associates. His first sentiment was that of revenge; and the enemy at this moment most hateful to him was Mac Gillpatrick, prince of Ossory, who had not only been the first to join against him, and had avowed his design of dispossessing him of his kingdom, but when that was effected, he had, with the savage barbarity of the age, seized upon his son and put out his eyes. He was chosen as the first object of his anger. The invasion of Ossory was rendered peculiarly difficult by its natural defences of bogs, woods, and hills; and its king now took possession of a difficult pass through which it was necessary that Dermod should enter his country, and, with five thousand Irish, stationed himself behind strong entrenchments, consisting of three large and deep fosses, with a hedge behind them. When the army of Dermod approached the defile, the English rushed forward to attack the entrenchments; foiled in their first attempt, the struggle was prolonged from morning till evening, and then, after much loss on both sides, the English knights burst through the hedge and put their opponents to flight, and Dermod's Irish spread themselves over the country to plunder and destroy.

When they were weary with desolating the country of Mac Gillpatrick, the Anglo-Irish army returned home laden with plunder. The king of Ossory and his army, after their defeat, had taken shelter in the woods, whence they now again assembled to harass the invaders on their retreat. Dermod's Irish, who were chiefly the men of Hy-Kinsellagh, were placed under the command of his natural son, Donald Kavenagh. The English, as the force most to be depended upon, always occupied the post of honour, marching in advance when they entered the hostile country, and holding the rear when they left it; and king Dermod marched with them as his surest guard. As they proceeded in this manner, Donald Kavenagh soon approached a dangerous defile; it was a place where, in his former wars with the people of Ossory, Dermod had been three times defeated, and his Irish, expecting now a similar disaster, fled precipitately to the woods the moment they saw the approach of the enemy, leaving their leader with only forty-three men. The king of Ossory took immediate advantage of this sudden flight, and hastened with seventeen hundred Irish to attack the English, who were not much more than three

hundred men. The latter were just passing the bottom of a little vale, in which they were apprehensive of an attack from the Irish. Maurice de Prendergast encouraged them by his exhortations, and urged them to keep close together until they had passed this critical position, when, having reached better ground, they might turn upon their pursuers; and at his suggestion, a party of archers was placed in ambush among the brushwood. The Irish, however, were allowed to pass the ambush without molestation, for the archers, terrified by their numbers, were afraid to show themselves. Soon, however, the English reached better ground; and then, raising their war-cry of "St. David!" they turned round upon the Ossorians, who, unable to resist opponents in armour, were quickly cut down or put to flight. The daring powers of Meiler fitz Henry was conspicuous every where; and Giraldus joins with his name that of Robert de Barri. The historian often dwells on the ambitious valour of his cousin Meiler, and the modest bravery of his brother Robert. When Dermod's Irish saw the result of the battle, they rushed from their concealment in the woods, and fell upon the rear of the fugitives; and with their peculiar weapons, the long axes, they cut off the heads of the slain. More than two hundred heads were thus laid at the feet of the king of Leinster. Giraldus tells us that Dermod danced exultingly among the heads of his foes, and that recognizing one as that of a person who had been peculiarly obnoxious to him, he suddenly seized upon it, raised it by the ears to his mouth, and, with barbarous joy, bit off the nose and part of the lips.

The victors proceeded the same night to the town of 'Fethelin,' to which there was a good and direct road, carrying with them their wounded; and the day following they returned to Ferns, where the Irish from most of the districts which had been subject to the king of Leinster, terrified at the exaggerated reports of the valour of his English allies, came in and gave hostages for their allegiance. The king of Ossory, however, with Mac Kelan king of Offelan (the district about Nass), and Hasculf mac Turkil king of Dublin, still held aloof. The next expedition of Dermod and his English was against Mac Kelan. Offelan was plundered and laid waste, and the booty carried to Ferns; and another similar enterprise carried them through Hy-Kinsellagh to Glendalough and the territory of O'Toole.

After again resting about a week at Ferns, Dermot resolved to reduce his old enemy Mac Gillpatrick to subjection, and proceeded a second time to invade Ossory. Donald Kavenagh now marched first at the head of five thousand Irish; next went the men of Wexford, whose fidelity was suspected by the English, and who were therefore placed in a separate division and closely watched; and Dermot and his English allies formed a third division. Thus Dermot and his army marched across the country, taking a different and circuitous route, as it would appear, into Ossory, till one night they came to a place called Fothard or Fethard, where king Dermot and the English encamped on the "water of Mac Burtin," according to Giraldus, in and about an old ruined fort. Here they witnessed a singular "phantasm," which appears to have made a strong impression on the English, as it is mentioned by both the historians; though Giraldus informs us that such appearances were of no uncommon occurrence during the Irish wars. Towards midnight they suddenly saw a vast army rushing upon them from every side. The greater part of the Irish, who were encamped near the English, struck with terror at this sudden attack, fled at once to the woods and bogs, leaving Meiler fitz Henry and Robert de Barri, who, it appears were with them, and who immediately hastened to the encampment of Fitz Stephen. They found the English in great alarm; for they, acted upon by their previous suspicions, imagined that it was the Wexford men who had betrayed them, and who had come upon them unawares. Randolph fitz Ralf was on the watch, and first saw the supposed assailants. In an instant he shouted the war-cry, "St. David!" drew his sword, and advanced towards the enemy. A soldier in armour advanced towards him, but a blow of Randolph's sword brought him to his knees; it was one of his fellow watchmen. The English had now time to discover their mistake; and the "phantasm" gradually disappeared, and as it passed by the camp of the Wexford men, they, equally suspicious of their new confederates, prepared to resist what they supposed was a treacherous attack by the English.

The army was again put in order next morning, and marching forwards in search of the king of Ossory, they found that he had seized upon a very difficult pass named Athethur, or Hathedur, which he had strengthened with a broad and deep fosse

and a hedge of hurdles. It was near night-fall when Dermot approached the pass, and he encamped on the banks of a large river which flowed between it and his army. At daybreak, the river was passed without opposition, and the Wexford men were appointed to attack the entrenchment. This was done with the utmost valour during three successive days, but the assailants were as often driven back by the Ossorians; until, on the third day, the English, marching up as the Irish retreated, burst through the hedge sword in hand, drove the men of Ossory from their position, and again opened a way for Dermot and his Irish to enter and ravage their country. The king of Ossory fled into Tipperary, through the district of Wenenath (Hy Nenath?), and thence to "Bertun." Dermot soon afterwards led back his army to Ferns, again laden with the spoils of his enemies.

These turbulent proceedings of Dermot and his allies at length roused the superior monarch, Roderic O'Connor, into activity, and he was now sensible of the necessity of expelling at once the foreign enemy that appeared to be preying on the vitals of his country before it became too strong to eradicate. His first step was to summon a general gathering of the princes and chiefs who acknowledged his authority, who assembled with their forces at Tara, once so celebrated, if we believe the Irish annals, for the splendour of its royal court, but now soon destined to bow its head for ever; and from thence they marched with an immense army of Irish to Dublin to join the Irish Danes of that city. Dermot had received early intelligence of the great confederation which had been formed against him; he lost no time in making peace with the unfortunate Ossorians, and returned to his capital, many of his Irish followers, who anticipated his overthrow, deserting him on the way. When he arrived at Ferns he had but a small force under his command beyond his faithful English allies. Not feeling himself strong enough to face in the field such an enemy as was now marching against him, the king of Leinster retreated with the English to a strong position near Ferns, surrounded by bogs and water, thick woods, and precipitous mountains;* which Fitz

* In loco ergo quodam non procul a Fernis, sylvis densissimis et montibus præruptis, aquisque et paludibus orbiculariter obsito, suique natura situque valde inaccessibili, cum suis se contulit.—Girald. Camb. Hibern. Expugn. cap. 5.

Stephen rendered almost impregnable by digging deep pits and ditches over the ground by which the entrance must be approached, and by narrowing the entrance and plashing the wood with trees that his men had cut down.

At Dublin, disunion began already to show itself in the councils of the king of Ireland, and his numerical forces were greatly diminished by the defection of the northern princes, Eochad king of Ulidia and O'Carrol king of Oriel, who drew off with their men, and returned home. His army, though still formidable, consisted now only of his own provincial troops, those of king O'Ruarc, and the Dano-Irish of Dublin, under Hasculf mac Turkil. When these forces proceeded to invest the position of Dermot near Ferns, the situation of the foreigners, in spite of their patience and courage, and the strength of their defences, seemed desperate; yet king Roderic had recourse to negotiation instead of fighting, and after he had attempted to treat separately, first with Fitz Stephen, and then with the king of Leinster, his first proposals being rejected by both, because they saw his weakness in this temporizing conduct, a compact was at length entered into between Roderic and Dermot, by which the latter was to be confirmed in the full possession of the whole kingdom of Leinster, for himself and his heirs, on condition of acknowledging, as usual, the supremacy of the present monarch of Ireland, and doing homage to him as to his liege lord. Dermot delivered as hostage for the performance of his part of the treaty, his favourite son, Connor, named by the English authorities Cnuth, and Roderic promised to confirm the family alliance by giving his daughter in marriage to this young prince.

Giraldus assures us, that there was a secret article in the treaty between the two kings, by which Dermot bound himself to receive no more English into his service, and to dismiss those who were with him as soon as he had entirely reduced his rebellious subjects. According to this latter stipulation, Dermot, and his allies, went about plundering and burning with little resistance, and this impunity of wrong soon drew multitudes of Irish to his standard. The king at last became, in consequence of his successes, so proud and overbearing, that he appears to have given umbrage even to his English allies, to whose exertions alone he owed them. Maurice de Prendergast, with his

followers to the number of two hundred, became so dissatisfied that they resolved to return home, and, taking their leave of king Dermot, they marched towards Wexford, where they found that he had already dispatched orders to hinder their embarkation.

Angry at Dermot's ingratitude, and unable without his assistance, to leave the country, Maurice now made an offer of his services to the king of Ossory, who eagerly accepted the offer, and appointed a meeting at Tech-Moylin.* The king of Leinster obtained intelligence of this transaction, and sent his natural son, Donald Kavenagh, with five hundred men, to oppose the march of the English, who, nevertheless, made their way in safety to the place of meeting; and when, on the third day after their arrival, the king of Ossory came in person, he and Maurice de Prendergast completed their alliance with mutual oaths of fidelity, and then marched into Ossory together. The war between the two kings now took a new turn; for, with the aid of his new ally, the king of Ossory was enabled to make reprisals upon Dermot, and he suddenly invaded the territory of O'More king of Leis (Queen's County), one of Dermot's adherents, where he plundered and burnt, in imitation of his enemies of Leinster, until O'More made his submission, and promised faithfully to deliver hostages on an appointed day. But the king of Leis had only made a feint to gain time; and while the invaders suspended their hostilities, and were quietly enjoying themselves, waiting the day fixed for the delivery of hostages, he privately sent a message to king Dermot in Leinster, urging him to hasten in joining him against their common enemy.

King Roderic also was amusing himself with the same kind of operations as his two dependent chiefs, and left them to decide their own quarrels. After breaking up his camp from before Ferns, and separating from his Dano-Irish allies, the king of Ireland carried his forces into Munster, against Donald, king of Limerick, who had thrown off his allegiance to the O'Connor, and set the crown of Connaught and of Ireland at defiance.

In the mean time the loss which Dermot had sustained by the defection of Maurice de Prendergast, was regained by a new arrival of English; for Maurice fitz Gerald had arrived at Wexford, bringing with him

* This part of the history is furnished by the Anglo-Norman rhymers (ll. 1057—1392); it is not in Giraldus.

ten knights, with thirty horse, and a hundred archers on foot, and they proceeded thence to Ferns. The messenger of O'More came to Dermod's court immediately after their arrival; and Dermod, encouraged by the presence of his new allies, and urged on by their counsel, assembled his army, and made a hasty march towards Leis. This expedition had been concerted with so much speed and secrecy, that the army of Leinster was far advanced on its way before the king of Ossory received by a spy the first intelligence of its approach. Feeling himself unequal to encounter the formidable forces now brought against him, he listened to the advice of Maurice de Prendergast, who probably was unwilling to fight against his own companions in arms, and retreated into his own dominions. Instead of following him, the king of Leinster himself took hostages of O'More, and then returned to Ferns. He then laid aside his designs against the king of Ossory, in order to march with his English allies to the aid of the king of Limerick; who, with this assistance, soon obtained the superiority over his assailant, and the monarch of Ireland was driven back with disgrace into his own hereditary kingdom of Connaught.

Maurice de Prendergast had meanwhile discovered that the service of the king of Ossory was equally ungrateful with that of the king of Leinster. The presence of the foreigners soon became a subject of jealousy to the Irish, especially in time of truce when the latter were not gaining by their superiority in war; and as the English appear to have been more provident than their Irish allies, the riches they had collected now provoked their cupidity. It was a repetition in a different form of the old story of the Saxon and Irish monks of Mayo. A plot was accordingly formed to surprise and murder Maurice and his men in their sleep, and to rob them of their share of the spoils. The conspirators even ventured to inform the king of their project, but he honestly refused to concur in it; and when Maurice demanded leave to depart with his followers for Wales, he readily acceded to his request. While the king moved on with his court to Fertnegeragh, the English passed the night at Kilkenny, ready to proceed the next morning on their march towards Waterford. Before his departure, however, Maurice de Prendergast received intelligence of the conspiracy against him, and he learnt that the Ossorians, who were privy to the plot, had

assembled to the number of two thousand men to interrupt him in his march, and that for this purpose they had seized a strong defile through which he was obliged to pass, which they had fortified against him. Maurice had now recourse to a stratagem as the only means of evading the dangers with which he was beset. He knew that the king of Ossory was desirous of retaining the English in his service, and he sent a messenger to his steward to say that he repented of his intention of returning home to Wales, and was now willing to enter into new engagements with his master. The king was overjoyed at this intelligence, and sent word that he would immediately return to Kilkenny; and the news of this change in the plans of the English adventurers being quickly spread over the country, the conspirators left their strong position in the mountain defile, and separated to seek their respective homes. Then Maurice de Prendergast and his companions, fearing that their enemies might assemble again, left Kilkenny secretly and by night, passed the defile without hindrance, and made a forced march to Waterford; whence, after a short stay and a quarrel with the citizens, arising from the death of an Irishman who had been wounded by one of the English soldiers, which was adjusted by the prudence and moderation of their leader, they passed the channel to Wales.

Thus ended, or nearly so, the first campaign of the English adventurers in Ireland. When we consider the small number of invaders, their success appears wonderful; but it was the victory of trained soldiers over undisciplined valour, and the Irish were defeated less by deficiency of courage in those who fought, than by the want of unity among the different petty states, and the consequent absence of the vigorous counsels necessary on an occasion when the independence of the whole island was threatened. It is evident that no treaties were binding on king Dermod, but this we have often found the case among the Irish chiefs in their wars with one another during the previous history, yet, they continued to make treaties with one another, and with him, as though no further dangers were to be anticipated. The projects of the king of Leicester became bolder when his strength was increased by the arrival of Maurice fitz Gerald and his followers, who immediately built themselves a stronghold upon a rock at Carrig, near Wexford. He now harboured designs of vengeance, first, against the people of Dublin, who, as

we have before related, had long before slain his father, and buried him along with a dog. Then he began to meditate war with the king of Connaught, who was already incensed with his breaches of covenant, and who, in retaliation for some petty depredations of Donald Kavenagh, invaded Leinster with a small army, but he was defeated by the English, and retreated into his own kingdom with disgrace. Thus encouraged, Dermot began to talk openly of still higher views, and, at length, he laid claim to the kingdom of Connaught itself, and to the monarchy of Ireland.

Dermot accordingly called together the English leaders who were then in Ireland, and on whose assistance chiefly he calculated, and demanded their advice, laying before them a special statement of his titles to the monarchy, and of the advantages which would

accrue to them all by the reduction of Connaught under his rule. He represented to them the facility of the conquest, and made them tempting promises, offering even the same terms which he had previously made with earl Strongbow, on whose assistance he seems now no longer to have counted. The English knights warmly commended king Dermot's ambitious projects, because they saw well that they must ultimately facilitate the reduction of the island under the supremacy of England, but they estimated, better than Dermot, the difficulties of the enterprise, and recommended him to act at first with the greatest secrecy, and, above all, to invite over a new and larger body of auxiliaries from England. By their advice he despatched a messenger to earl Strongbow to urge him to fulfil his engagements.

CHAPTER X.

EARL STRONGBOW IN IRELAND.



HOUGH earl Richard had made no open preparations for the fulfilment of his agreement with the king of Leinster, he had been anxiously watching the progress of the first invaders, and was secretly getting everything ready to follow them. Their successes, and the pressing message he now received from Dermot, decided him in his determination to appear on the scene without further delay; but, with such a fortune at stake as was thus held out to him, he resolved not to depend entirely on the general licence which Dermot had obtained from king Henry to enlist English adventurers in his cause. He repaired to that monarch in Normandy, laid his case before him, and demanded his permission to accept the terms of the Irish chief, and embark on this important undertaking. The reception which the earl met with from the English king was not encouraging; but, after the demand had been repeated in more pressing terms, the king, at length, tired with his importunities, dismissed him with an equivocal answer, which Strongbow construed into an implied approval, and he returned immediately to

Wales to hasten his preparations. There, during the winter, he collected a very considerable force, consisting partly of his own vassals, and partly of volunteers. When he was on the point of embarkation, he is said to have received sudden and positive orders from the king to desist from his undertaking, on pain of being treated as a rebel, and of forfeiting his English estates. But earl Strongbow had gone too far to withdraw himself easily from his agreement; though he hesitated a moment, the summer of 1170 found him definitely coasting the Welsh side of the Bristol channel, on his way to Ireland.

He had already despatched as his precursor a gallant companion in arms, celebrated in the subsequent history of this Anglo-Irish war, for his corpulency, by the name of Raymund le Gros. With ten knights and about seventy archers, Raymund landed under shelter of a rock, which is called by Giraldus Dundonolf, and by the Norman rhymer Domdonuil, which appears to answer very exactly in its description and position to the little promontory of Bagabun already described. Here, among the rocks, he fortified his camp with earth and turfs, and was joined at his

first arrival by Hervy de Montmaurice, whose lands must have been at no great distance from this place, and who brought with him three knights. Altogether Raymund's company amounted to about a hundred men. When the intelligence of their arrival reached Waterford, which was then governed by two Danish chieftains, named in the Anglo-Norman poem Reginald and Smorch,* the citizens assembled in haste to expel these new invaders. They had been joined, probably in anticipation of the arrival of Strongbow, by the people of Ossory as well as by O'Felan king of the Desies, and O'Rian king of Hy-Drone; and a formidable but tumultuous army of about three thousand men, in three divisions, crossed the Suire, and hastened towards the camp at Dundunolf. Raymund and his English boldly sallied forth to meet their assailants, but, too few to hold the field against so numerous an army, they were quickly compelled to retire to their entrenchments, so closely pursued by the Irish, that both parties were on the point of entering the camp together, when Raymund, turning round at the entrance, struck down with his sword several of the foremost of his pursuers, and the English, rallying at the shout of their leader, rushed upon the Irish, who, already fallen into disorder in the pursuit, and surprised by the suddenness of this unexpected attack, fled in every direction. According to the story told by Maurice Regan, Raymund owed this victory partly to an accident. The English, on their first arrival, had swept the cattle from the surrounding country, and had placed them in the outer inclosure of their camp. Confined within a small circuit, and mad with terror at the fierce shouts of the Irish and at the clashing of the English armour, in their eagerness to seek a place of safety, they made their way furiously through the entrance of the camp and rushed headlong upon the Irish, who hastily made way for them, and were thus thrown into still greater confusion. The English, seizing on this critical moment, attacked their enemies, and made a terrible slaughter. The Anglo-Norman minstrel, on the authority of Maurice Regan, estimates the loss of the Irish in killed, wounded, and captured, at a thou-

* Reginald e Smorch erent clamé
Les plus poanz de la cité.

Anglo-Norman poem, l. 1506.

The latter name does not occur in Giraldus, who makes Reginald the chief of the men of Waterford.

sand men*; Giraldus says that five hundred were killed. Raymund lost one of his bravest men, Alice de Berveny. This triumph of the English was blotted with an unnecessary and cruel act of vengeance; for seventy citizens of Waterford having been taken prisoners, a council was held to decide on their fate. The generous Raymund urged strongly that they should be treated with mercy, and that the offers of their fellow citizens to pay a large ransom for their liberty should be listened to; but the recommendation of his more ferocious comrade Hervy de Montmaurice, who advocated the policy too often pursued in after times of striking terror into the Irish, was adopted, and the unfortunate prisoners were hurried to the summit of the rock, and thence, after their limbs had been deliberately broken, they were cast headlong into the sea. This cruel act was long afterwards remembered as a stain upon the character of Hervy de Montmaurice, and drew upon him blame from his own countrymen as well as the execration of the Irish†. The interest afterwards attached to it is shown by the importance given to it by Giraldus, who repeats the arguments supposed to have been used by the English leaders for and against such an act of severity.

If the statement of Giraldus be correct, that Raymund landed at Dundunolf on the first of May, he must have remained inactive, cooped up in his little camp nearly four months. Perhaps, however, the date given by this historian is erroneous, for it appears more probable that his arrival occurred some weeks later, and the Norman minstrel, quoting as usual the authority of "the old people,"‡ says that it was quickly followed by that of earl Strongbow. The latter, in passing along the Welsh coast, had been joined by Maurice de Prendergast and his followers,

* Illec csteint desconfiz
Les Yrcis tuz de cel pais;
Al camp erent mil remis,
Vencuz, mors, naffrez, e pris.

Anglo-Norman poem, l. 1466.

† Maurice Regan informed the Anglo-Norman rhymer that the prisoners were beheaded by the order of Raymund himself, in revenge for the death of his friend Alice de Berveny; but this is evidently a mere report, arising probably from the difficulty of assigning a probable cause for so great an act of atrocity.

‡ The words of the poem are—

"Solum le dit as ansciens,
Bien tost après, Richard li quens
A Waterford ariva;
Bien quinz cent od sei mena.
La vile seint Bartholomé
Esteit li quens arivé."

who returned with him to Ireland; and he landed in the neighbourhood of Waterford, with an army of nearly fifteen hundred men, of whom full two hundred were knights, on the eve of St. Bartholomew (August 23, 1170), and impatient of further delay, they marched by common consent the next morning to attack the city of Waterford. The townsmen, who seem to have shown little courage, or little patriotism, in tamely submitting to the presence of Raymund's small band so long and to the murder of their fellow-citizens, now made a gallant defence. The assailants had been twice repulsed with loss from the ramparts, when Strongbow, observing a wooden house which was attached to the wall of the city, ordered some of his men, under cover of their armour, to cut down the post which supported it. The house fell, and dragged with it a large portion of the wall; and the English rushed through the breach, and putting to death all who opposed them, made themselves masters of the city. It is not easy to account for the peculiar ferocity exhibited by the English invaders against the devoted inhabitants of this place, unless upon the same policy of striking terror into their enemies at the first outset; they are said to have given up the city to pillage and indiscriminate slaughter. The two "Sytracs" (as they are termed by Giraldus) were slain in Reginald's Tower, so called from one of the Danish governors, who was himself captured in it, with O'Felan king of the Desies, and both these chiefs would have been put to death, but for the arrival of Dermot, who came just as they were led to execution, and interceded in their favour.

King Dermot was accompanied with Robert fitz Stephen and Maurice fitz Gerald, and he brought his beautiful daughter Eva, whose dower was to be the kingdom of Leinster after his death. The nuptials of Strongbow and Eva were celebrated immediately, while the city was still reeking with the slaughter of its inhabitants. Raymund le Gros, who had remained with Henry de Montmaurice and Walter Blueit at Dundunolf, also came, with their small party, to be present at the ceremony. Dermot had brought with him the intelligence of the revolt of Dublin; and, after holding a council of war, they placed a small garrison in Waterford, and marched thither with the mass of the army.

This formidable invasion, and the fate of Waterford, spread consternation through the

whole island, and the various subordinate chiefs, alarmed at the progress of the foreigners, assembled in haste under the banner of king Roderic O'Connor, and marched with him to assist the citizens of Dublin. The Irish monarch fixed his head quarters at Clondalkin, and distributed his army, which is said to have amounted to thirty thousand wild warriors, in the woods and passes over the country through which he supposed that Dermot and his allies must have proceeded to Dublin, with directions to fortify all the passes on the road, and to plash the woods. The king of Leinster had, however, received timely intelligence of the movements of his enemies; he consulted the English leaders, and it was resolved to change their route, to avoid the woods, and to march over the mountains by Glendalough. The first division of the army, consisting of seven hundred English, with whom was Donald Kavenagh, was led by Miles de Cogan, one of the bravest of the English adventurers. Next came Raymund, with eight hundred English. The third division consisted of a thousand English and three thousand Irish, under the immediate command of earl Strongbow; and after these came the main body of Dermot's Irish auxiliaries. The Irish army of O'Connor, after a little skirmishing, broke up as the army of Dermot approached, and left the Danes to defend their own cause with the best means in their power. The regular discipline and arrangement of the Anglo-Irish army was a sight to which the native Irish were totally unaccustomed.

On St. Matthew's day (the 21st of September) the invaders came in sight of Dublin, which was defended by its Danish chieftain, Hasculf mac Turkil. The main body of the army halted at a short distance from the city, while Miles de Cogan encamped just under the wall; as did also Raymund, though at another point. Maurice Regan was immediately sent to the governor of the city, to require its delivery to Dermot, with thirty hostages; and the citizens, deserted by their Irish allies, and unequal to cope with so formidable an armament, were little inclined to risk their lives and property by an obstinate resistance. We are told that the archbishop of Dublin, Laurence O'Toole, urged them to accede to Dermot's demand, and that the only subject of disagreement was the choice of the hostages, for the arrangement of which Hasculf demanded a truce till the following day. But Dermot was deaf to all counsels

but those of violence, and the negotiation was prolonged in Strongbow's camp. In the meanwhile Miles de Cogan, impatient of delay, and pretending that the period fixed for treating was past, ordered his men to the walls, and forced his way into the city. Raymund, who seems to have acted partly in concert with him, made a simultaneous and equally successful attack on the other side. The opposition was not great, and the wretched citizens were slaughtered almost unresisting. Many rushed inconsiderately into the water and were drowned. The greater part, however, seem to have been prepared for the event, and had hurried their more valuable effects into their ships, with which, and their leader Hasculf, they fled to the northern islands. Still the city yielded to its conquerors a rich booty. Thus, after a short struggle attended with great slaughter, Cogan was master of Dublin, before Dermot or Strongbow knew of the attack. The city was given to the charge of Miles de Cogan, with a small garrison, under the lordship of earl Strongbow, and the latter returned with Dermot to Ferns.

Thence they proceeded to overrun the district of Meath, the prince of which, having usurped the government by murdering his kinsman, had been expelled by king Roderic, and had now sought the assistance of Dermot and his allies. O'Connor, after the expulsion of this prince, had appropriated one half of Meath to himself, and given the other to king O'Ruarc. This was a double motive for the invasion by Dermot, who wreaked his vengeance in the most cruel desolation, not even sparing churches and sacred places, which the monarch of Ireland, in the embarrassment of the moment, was unable to prevent. Dermot had but recently bound himself by a solemn oath of allegiance to king Roderic, and had given his own favourite son, a son of Donald Kavenagh, and some other persons of distinction, as hostages for his obedience; and now Roderic reproached him with his breach of faith, and the new danger he had drawn upon his country, and threatened, unless he withdrew his forces from Meath, to put the hostages to death. Dermot replied disdainfully, defied the power of the monarch, and renounced his authority, openly avowing, at the same time, his pretensions to the kingdom of Connaught and to the throne of Ireland. The king of Ireland, enraged at this behaviour, immediately cut off the heads of his hostages. This cruel act only embittered the war; and even

the Irish annalists speak with detestation of the crime, and describe Dermot's son as the noblest and most amiable youth of Leinster.

During the remainder of the year, the allies were constantly occupied in ravaging and plundering the various petty states against which Dermot could invent any excuse for hostility; but in an attempt to crush his old enemy O'Ruarc, the king of Leinster was twice defeated, and was eventually compelled to make a hasty retreat out of the territory of Breffny. About the end of the year king Dermot died at Ferns, according to the Irish authorities, of an unknown and loathsome malady, and Strongbow, in right of his wife, took the title, not of king, but of "earl" of Leinster.

On the death of Dermot, a new confederacy of the Irish chieftains was immediately formed against the English, the only native chiefs who remained faithful to them being Donald Kavenagh, Mac Gelay, of Tir-Brun, and Dermot's old friend Awelif O'Carvy. O'Connor again summoned the Irish kings to his banner, and a new host of wild warriors, estimated by Maurice Regan at sixty thousand men, poured down to Dublin to wrest that city from its conquerors. O'Connor, with the half of his army, encamped at Castel Knock; Mac Dunleve, of Ulster, fixed his banner at Clontarf; O'Brian, of Munster, established himself at Kilnainham; while Moriertagh, king of Hy-Kinsellagh, encamped towards Dalkie; and, according to Giraldus, the port was besieged by a fleet of islanders, headed by Godfred king of Man. The siege became a regular blockade, and the English had been closely confined within the walls of Dublin two months, when in a council, at which Strongbow himself, Robert de Quency, Walter de Riddlesford, Maurice de Prendergast, Miles de Cogan, Meiler fitz Henry, Miles fitz David, Richard de Marreis, Walter Blueit, and others of the bravest and most experienced of the English chiefs were present, it was announced that the city did not contain provisions sufficient to last with economy a fortnight, and it was proposed to treat with the besiegers. Other subjects of alarm combined to force them to this resolution. At the first serious apprehension of danger, Strongbow had sent for succours to Robert fitz Stephen, who sent him a considerable portion of his small garrison from Wexford; and now Donald Kavenagh arrived at Dublin with some Irish of Hy-Kinsellagh, accompanied by O'Ragely and Awelif O'Carvy, bringing intelligence of

the revolt of the people of Wexford, and of the desperate position of Fitz Stephen, cooped up with his few companions in the little fort of Carrig. The archbishop of Dublin and Maurice de Prendergast were accordingly chosen to negotiate between O'Connor and the besieged, the latter proposing that Strongbow should hold Leinster in fee of the king of Connaught. But O'Connor, having suddenly assumed an overweening confidence in his own strength and in the weakness of the English, would not listen to their propoals, but resolving at once to reduce them to the same footing on which the Danes had previously stood in those towns, declared peremptorily that he would allow the English nothing more than Dublin, Wexford, and Waterford. Another council of war was held in Dublin, and O'Connor's haughty language having produced a contrary effect to that intended, it was resolved to break off the negotiations, and to make a sudden sally out upon the besiegers; the camp of O'Connor being selected as the first point of attack. A chosen band of six hundred English was secretly assembled, and divided into three divisions. Two hundred marched first under Miles de Cogan; they were followed by another party of two hundred, led by Raymund; and Strongbow himself came last, with a third division of two hundred men, accompanied by Donald Kavenagh, O'Carry, and O'Ragely. The Irish were in this instance betrayed by their over-security; for the first notice they had of the approach of an enemy was the redoubted cry of "St. David!" raised in the very midst of their tents, and a great part of them were occupied in bathing, and were therefore totally unprepared for defence. Nearly two thousand were slain, and O'Connor himself, who was in the bath, narrowly escaped. The English pursued the fugitives till towards evening, and then returned to the city laden with provisions. The various Irish chiefs, who with their numerous forces still surrounded Dublin, instead of attempting to retrieve the disgrace of O'Connor and his comparatively small portion of the besieging army, thought that, after their chieftain had allowed himself to be beaten, he had no longer any claim on their services, and they all broke up their camps and returned to their several homes.

The very day after the raising of the siege of Dublin, earl Strongbow began his march, with a considerable portion of his army, to Wexford, to relieve Fitz Stephen; but he

was not allowed by the Irish to proceed without interruption. O'Rian, king of Hy-Drone, with a much more numerous army than that of Strongbow, had taken possession of a strong pass through which the English were obliged to march in their way through that district (the present county of Carlow), and there, hemmed in by woods, rocks, and marshes, the latter found themselves unexpectedly attacked, and were thrown into confusion by the suddenness of the surprise, and by the hideous yells of the assailants. Their leaders exerted themselves to restore order, and Meiler fitz Henry, who especially distinguished himself by his bravery on this occasion, was struck to the ground with a stone, and was with difficulty saved. But the man who distinguished himself most by his valour in this battle was a monk named Nichol, who did the duty of an experienced soldier in the invading army, and slew king O'Rian with an arrow. On the loss of their chief, the Irish fled in consternation, and left the earl, who is said to have had but one man killed, to continue his march without further interruption. But he reached Wexford too late to relieve the small but brave garrison of the fort of Carrig.

Robert fitz Stephen and his companions had defended themselves with exemplary courage, and had repeatedly beaten off their assailants, when the latter, despairing of being able to make any impression by force, demanded a parley to speak of conditions. The besiegers now informed Fitz Stephen that Dublin was taken, that the English had all been put to the sword, and that king O'Connor was on his way to Wexford with the whole Irish army. They declared that they had no wish to injure the English in Carrig, but, that on the contrary, they were desirous of saving them from the fate of their companions who had perished in Dublin; and they promised that, if they would yield themselves prisoners, they should be allowed to pass over to Wales in safety. Fitz Stephen, at first, gave no credit to this statement; on which the people of Wexford brought with them the bishops of that see and of Kildare, with other religious persons, and swore solemnly upon the holy relics that their information was correct. Fitz Stephen's confidence was now shaken, and, believing that Dublin was lost, and that he was thus deprived of all hope of relief, he surrendered; on which the Irish, regardless of their promise, rushed upon their prisoners, slew several, and threw the rest, with their

commander, into chains. Perhaps the people of Wexford had been themselves deceived by exaggerated reports of the successes of O'Connor and the Irish army; but when they heard of the near approach of earl Strongbow, they were struck with the greatest consternation, and, after burning their town, they took refuge, with their more valuable effects, and with their prisoners, in a little island at the entrance of their harbour, called Begerin (Little Ireland). They thence sent a messenger to the earl, declaring that they kept the prisoners merely as hostages for their own protection, but threatening, in case he made any further attempt against them, that they should immediately be put to death. He yielded to what appeared the safest counsel, that of leaving the Wexfordians and their captives undisturbed; and, quitting the smoking ruins of their town, the English turned, with sorrow in their hearts, towards Waterford.

As far as we can learn from the Irish chronicles, the various chiefs who had assembled round Dublin under the banners of O'Connor, only separated to break into fresh feuds with one another, or with those who had stood aloof. It was, perhaps, some such feud between the princes of Munster and Ossory that now influenced Strongbow's movements. On his arrival at Waterford, he sent in haste a messenger to Limerick, with letters to O'Brian, king of Munster, who had, like himself, married a daughter of king Dermot, inviting him to join in the invasion of Ossory. The king of Munster declared his willingness to make war against the enemy of his father-in-law, but it is probable that the pursuing of his own feuds, and the prospects of plunder, were greater inducements with him; and he joined the earl at Ydough, where their joint army amounted to two thousand men. The king of Ossory, who appears to have done nothing to provoke this attack, demanded a safe conduct and an interview with Strongbow, that he might pacify his enemies, to whom he promised to make reparation for all injuries he might be accused of having offered to Dermot. His old ally, Maurice de Prendergast, stood forward as his advocate, and obtained the safe conduct on his own responsibility, conducting him himself into the earl's presence, after having obtained the oaths of the English barons that the king should be allowed to return in safety to the woods. Strongbow loaded the king of Ossory with reproaches for his treason against

Dermot; and O'Brian of Munster urgently recommended the English chiefs to arrest him now that he was in their power, while, thinking he perceived some inclination to follow his counsel, he gave secret orders to his own Irish to sally forth and plunder the country. But Maurice de Prendergast, having received intimation of what was going on, immediately ordered his men to arms; then hastening in person to the place where the earl and his barons were assembled, he reproached them with treachery, and, laying his hand upon his sword, swore that the first who should dare to lay hands on the king of Ossory, should pay dear for his temerity. The earl, however, declared that he had harboured no design against the king, and delivered him to his conductor, who, with his men, accompanied him in his return to the woods. On their way they met the men of Munster returning to their camp laden with spoils, whom Maurice ordered his men at once to attack, and several of them were killed, and the rest dispersed. He passed the night in the woods with the king of Ossory, and the next morning returned to the English camp, where his high character saved him from suspicion of disaffection to the earl's cause, which his bold conduct might have raised. We must suppose that a truce, if not a peace, was made with the king of Ossory; for O'Brian of Munster returned to Limerick immediately after this conference, and the earl proceeded to Ferns, the capital of his earldom (according to the English notions), or kingdom (as the Irish looked upon it), of Leinster. The Irish annals, which contain no mention of these events,* tell us, that the earl's son, a youth now first initiated into the realities of war, having gone out on a predatory excursion, plundered the churches of the plain of Leinster and a large portion of Hy-Faolain, or Byrne's country. It was, probably, on this occasion, that they captured Murrough O' Byrne and his son, whom they brought to Ferns a few days after the earl's return from Ossory, and they were both put to

* The account of the invasion of Ossory is preserved only by the Anglo-Norman rhymers, whose narrative is here of great value to us. It alone enables us to arrange in proper order the different attacks upon Dublin which occurred during the present year. Giraldus Cambrensis has reversed the order of the two grand sieges by O'Connor and Hasculf, and the Irish annalists appear to have obtained their brief notices, directly or indirectly, from Giraldus. A comparison of different circumstances shows clearly that the metrical Norman historian is right.

death as traitors. The son of earl Strongbow appears to have accompanied Donald Kavenagh, for, according to the account given by the Anglo-Norman rhymers, it was he who captured the son of O'Byrne. Muriertach, king of Hy-Kinsellagh, at the same time made his peace with the English, and was allowed to retain his kingdom.

In the midst of these increasing calamities, when anything like a unity of civil power in the island seemed hopeless, the clergy had interfered, and a general synod was called at Armagh, for the purpose of taking into consideration the perilous state of the country. After mature consultation, the assembled clergy came to the final conclusion, generous in feeling, but impotent in judgment, that the Irish had brought these calamities upon themselves by the long continued practice of making bond-slaves of the English, whom they had purchased from merchants, as well as from robbers and pirates, and that it was the will of heaven, that in punishment for this crime the whole nation should be reduced to slavery; and they decreed, that all the English who were then in bondage throughout Ireland should be immediately set free. It is probable, from the result of this synod, that the Irish clergy, with sentiments honourable to their profession, perhaps under the influence of the archbishop of Dublin (Laurence O'Toole), had, of late, joined in preaching against this practice, which was by no means confined to the Irish, although it was, perhaps, longer preserved there in its original barbarity. Giraldus, who gives the account of the synod of Armagh, observes, that before the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, the English, "by a common vice of the nation," had been accustomed, at the approach of want or poverty, to offer their children in sale to the Irish, who carried them away into bondage.

Another event at this moment seemed to darken the prospects of the English adventurers in Ireland. King Henry of England, who hitherto seemed to have taken little notice of the proceedings of earl Strongbow, now suddenly proclaimed his high displeasure that one of his subjects should have dared to make such extensive conquests without the authority of his sovereign. He commanded him to appear in person at his court, confiscated his English estates, and forbade any ship in future, without the royal orders, to transport men or arms from England to the neighbouring island. The earl sent Hervy de Montmaurice, whose character

appears to have stood high with all parties, to England to remonstrate with the king. His mission, however, does not appear to have produced any satisfactory results, and he returned to Waterford, while Strongbow was occupied in the invasion of Ossory. After a short consultation at Ferns, the earl proceeded in person to England, leaving Dublin in the charge of Miles de Cogan, who had been made governor at the time of its capture, and having placed Waterford in the custody of Gilbert de Borard. Giraldus says, that Strongbow met king Henry at Newenham, in Gloucestershire; and that he there succeeded in pacifying the English monarch, and, after agreeing to surrender to him Dublin with its adjoining cantreds, and all the maritime towns, as well as the strong castles of Leinster, he obtained the royal grant in fee to himself and heirs of the whole of his Irish acquisitions.

Strongbow had scarcely left the Irish shores, when a new danger of an unexpected character presented itself before Dublin. Hasculf mac Turkil, the Danish king of this city, had been busily occupied in collecting a numerous army of Danes and others among the islands; and he had been joined by a famous Norwegian chieftain called John the Furious.* These two chieftains entered the Liffy together, with from sixty to a hundred ships. At Pentecost, which that year fell on the sixteenth of May, Miles de Cogan prepared for a vigorous defence. Gihneholmock, an Irish king who had been hitherto faithful to the English, and whose hostages were in Dublin, came with his men to range themselves under Cogan's standard, who appears to have been suspicious of their honesty, and, with a real or feigned sentiment of chivalry, he ordered the Irish chieftain to stand aloof and look on while he fought his own battle, telling him that, if the English gave way, he might join the enemy, but, taking his promise that, should they singly obtain the victory, he would join them in the destruction of the invaders. The Norman poet gives the name of "the Hogges of Sustein" to the place where Gilmeholmock stationed himself.

This matter was hardly arranged, when John the Furious, at the head of a large body of Danes and Norwegians, approached

* Giraldus calls him in Latin Johannes Vehemens. The Norman rhymers give him the name of Johan le Devé, and Giraldus tells us, that by the English of the time he was termed John the Woode.

the eastern gate of the city. Giraldus describes the assailants as men clad in iron, some in long coats of mail, others in armour formed of plates of the same metal skilfully joined together, with round red shields, the edges of which were also defended with iron. Miles de Cogan, with a part of the garrison, marched out boldly to meet them; but the Danes, whose hearts, as Giraldus tells us, seemed to be made of the same metal as their arms, pressed fiercely upon the English. Their leader proved himself worthy of his name. With a blow of his axe he cut in two the thigh of an English knight, though cased in iron, so that his leg fell to the ground. Miles de Cogan was ultimately obliged to withdraw his men and seek shelter behind the walls of Dublin. But his brother, Richard de Cogan, whose courage was no less conspicuous than his own, had left the city secretly by another gate with about thirty knights and a large company of foot, and just as the others were entering the town, hard pressed by their assailants, he suddenly fell upon that part of the Danish army which was left in the rear. Those who had advanced to the assault of the city were thus compelled, at the very moment, as they thought, of victory, to hurry back to the assistance of their companions, of whom Richard de Cogan was making terrible havoc. Miles de Cogan rallied his men, and fell upon them as they went; John the Furious was himself slain by Walter de Riddlesford, one of Cogan's knights; Hasculf had already surrendered himself a captive to Richard de Cogan; and, to complete the discomfiture of the Danes, Gilmeholmoek, seeing from his

camp the confusion into which the English had thrown their opponents, and fearing to lose his chance of a share in the victory and in the spoil, rushed down with his Irish to join in the slaughter. The field of battle was covered with the corpses of the Danes, of whom two thousand are said to have been slain in the battle; and the victors pursued them so closely to the sea, that five hundred more were drowned in attempting to reach their ships. Hasculf was brought into the presence of Miles de Cogan in Dublin; but he replied to all his questions with insolent threats, and the English governor ordered him immediately to be put to death.

We are not informed whether any of the Irish chiefs rose to second this attempt of the Danes upon Dublin; but the Irish chronicles state that, subsequently to the defeat of the Danes, the old enemy of Dermot and of the English, Tiernan O'Ruarc, raising the men of Breffny and Orgial, marched to Dublin against Miles de Cogan and his knights, but that he was defeated in a battle in which he lost his eldest son, Hugh, with several other Irish of distinction. Perhaps he was marching to assist Hasculf, and arrived too late. The English of Dublin, thus delivered of their formidable assailants, appear subsequently to have engaged in a number of predatory expeditions, alone or in conjunction with some of the Irish chiefs, who now courted their assistance, and were inclined to link themselves to their fortunes. The Irish chronicles tell us that on one of these raids "the earl's people" plundered Chuain Conaire, Galam, and Lathrach Briuin, in Kildare.

CHAPTER XI.

PROGRESS OF KING HENRY II. IN IRELAND.



th^{an} was supposed. His conduct towards king Dermot first, and, afterwards, to his noble son-in-law, was hesitating and equivocal; and it was sufficiently evident that he reserved himself with further views than it was his policy to disclose. During the two

years which had passed since the invaders landed on the coast of Leinster, the English monarch had been hindered from interfering by a multitude of anxieties, arising, in the first place, from the turbulence of his rebellious barons abroad, and, subsequently, from his quarrels with Becket, and the murder of that bold and eminent prelate; but soon after this latter event, he rather suddenly left Normandy, and his other possessions in France, to their subordinate rulers, passed over into England, and there, having raised

a formidable army, he marched rapidly towards the coast of Wales, and announced his design of visiting Ireland in person, publicly laying claim to the sovereignty of that island, and speaking of the Anglo-Norman invaders, equally with those who resisted them, as subjects in rebellion against him, their liege lord.

This great monarch had, indeed, long contemplated the annexation of the crown of Ireland to his own, but he had proceeded deliberately and with caution. Some writers speak of the attempt to deduce a claim to sovereignty over the sister island from old and legendary rights or conquests; some declared that the Irish originally settled there by permission of Gurguntius, king of Britain, which therefore proved the superior sovereignty of the latter island; others said that Ireland had been conquered by the redoubtable king Arthur, and that he had made it an appendage to the British crown; while others established a claim upon the very equivocal conquests of Egfrid, king of Northumberland. But king Henry proceeded on safer grounds than any of these. An Englishman, Nicholas Breakspeare, was raised to the papacy in 1154, under the title of Adrian IV., and to him the king addressed himself in secret. A trusty and able messenger, the king's own chaplain, the celebrated John of Salisbury, was despatched next year to Rome, and he there represented, in strong terms, the profligacy and turbulence of the Irish people, the ignorance and corruption of their church, its disobedience to the apostolic see, and the unhappy state of the island, and made the holy pontiff acquainted with the wish of the king of England to enter it by force of arms, and reduce it to temporal and spiritual obedience, with the charitable object of instructing its ignorant inhabitants, and spreading the influence of the Gospel in its purity and perfection. King Henry asked for the papal benediction on his enterprise, and promised to reserve religiously for the holy see, an annual tribute from the territory thus to be brought into a healthful obedience to the see of Rome and to the crown of England. The pope acceded gladly to this request; he is pretended to have derived a special right to the temporal sovereignty of Ireland from the gift of king Donchad in 1064; but the pontiff now claimed a more universal sovereignty, and assumed to himself the right of giving thrones and sceptres from one end of the earth to the other. A former pope had given Eng-

land to William the Conqueror; this pope followed his example with regard to Ireland, and John of Salisbury brought home to England a bull authorizing the king to proceed at his convenience to the invasion and conquest of that island, and giving, in its strongest form, the ecclesiastical sanction to his undertaking.* With this important document the pope sent king Henry a ring,

* It will, perhaps, not be out of place to give this remarkable and important document entire.

"Adrian, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his dearest son in Christ, the illustrious king of England, greeting and apostolic benediction. Full laudably and profitably hath your magnificence conceived the design of propagating your glorious renown on earth, and completing your reward of eternal happiness in heaven: while, as a catholic prince, you are intent on enlarging the borders of the church, teaching the truth of the Christian faith to the ignorant and rude, exterminating the roots of vice from the field of the Lord, and for the more convenient execution of this purpose, requiring the counsel and favour of the apostolic see. In which, the maturer your deliberation, and the greater the discretion of your procedure, by so much the happier, we trust, will be your progress, with the assistance of the Lord; as all things are used to come to a prosperous end and issue which take their beginning from the ardour of faith, and the love of religion. There is, indeed, no doubt that Ireland, and all the islands on which Christ, the sun of righteousness, hath shone, and which have received the doctrines of the Christian faith, do belong to the jurisdiction of St. Peter and of the holy Roman church, as your excellency also doth acknowledge. And, therefore, we are the more solicitous to propagate the righteous plantation of faith in this land, and the branch acceptable to God, as we have the secret conviction of conscience that this is more especially our bounden duty. You, then, most dear son in Christ, have signified unto us your desire to enter into the island of Ireland, in order to reduce the people to obedience unto the laws, and to extirpate the plants of vice; and that you are willing to pay from each house a yearly pension of one penny to St. Peter, and that you will preserve the rights of the churches of this land whole and inviolate. We, therefore, with that grace and acceptance suited to your pious and laudable design, and favourably assenting to your petition, do hold it good and acceptable that, for extending the borders of the church, restraining the progress of vice, for the correction of manners, the planting of virtue, and the increase of religion, you enter this island, and execute therein whatever shall pertain to the honour of God and welfare of the land; and that the people of this land receive you honourably, and reverence you as their lord; the rights of their churches still remaining sacred and inviolate, and saving to St. Peter the annual pension of one penny from every house. If then you be resolved to carry the design you have conceived into effectual execution, study to form this nation to virtuous manners; and labour, by yourself and by others whom you shall judge meet for this work, in faith, word, and life, that the church may be there adorned, that the religion of the Christian faith may be planted and grow up, and that all things pertaining to the honour of God and the salvation of souls, be so ordered, that you may be entitled to the

as a token of his investiture as rightful monarch of Ireland. Other occupations had intervened to call off Henry's attention from this favourite project of aggrandisement, and the bull lay concealed in the royal archives, totally unknown to the public. Adrian IV. died in 1159, and was succeeded by Alexander III., who fully confirmed the bull of his predecessor. Thus authorized by the direct sanction of two succeeding popes, and wishing not only to disappear for a while from one turbulent scene, which had become too warm for him, but also to perform an act which would be agreeable to the see of Rome, king Henry suddenly acted upon the bull of Adrian, and marched forwards to reap the fruits of the two years' labours of the Anglo-Norman chiefs in Ireland.

King Henry had no sooner reached Pembroke than he had an opportunity of assuming the sovereignty of Ireland. His designs were already known to the Irish, yet no preparation of any kind was made to offer a serious resistance.* The men of Wexford still held Robert fitz Stephen and his companions in arms prisoners in the isle of Begerin, and they now determined to use them as a means of making their peace with the English king. Chosen deputies were sent to Pembroke, where they fell on their knees before king Henry, and, in the name of the citizens, acknowledged themselves as his subjects, with humble professions of fidelity and obedience, placing their town and possessions at his disposal. They added, that they had already endeavoured to show their zeal in his cause by seizing the traitor Robert fitz Stephen, who, they said, in his turbulent pride, had not only been rebellious in England, but had come with ships, and invaded his realm of Ireland, ravaged his territory, and plundered his subjects, and that they now held the offender in prison at his royal disposal. The king gave them a favourable reception, thanked them for the service they had rendered him, and requested them to keep the prisoners in safety till his arrival, when he would himself inquire into their offences, and do justice to his Irish

fulness of eternal reward from God, and obtain a glorious renown on earth throughout all ages."

* The Irish annalists tell us so little of these events, that the only notice taken of king Henry's visit, in 1171, in the Annals of the Four Masters, is to inform us, that "Henry the Second, king of England, duke of Normandy, earl of Anjou, and lord of many other countries, came to Ireland this year with a fleet of two hundred and forty ships, and landed at Waterford."

subjects against all who should venture to wrong them. He thus probably, at least, saved the captives from further danger or ill-treatment.

On the evening of the sixteenth of October, the English monarch, attended by Strongbow, and several other great barons who were now destined to act a prominent part in Irish history, such as William fitz Aldelm, Humfrey de Bohun, Hugh de Lacy, Robert fitz Bernard, and Bertram de Verdun, sailed from Milford Haven with a fleet of two hundred and forty ships, carrying on board four hundred knights and about four thousand soldiers; and the next day, which was Sunday, he landed at Croch, near Waterford, which city he entered as sovereign of Ireland on the Monday morning, being the festival of St. Luke.* A tradition, current as early as the reign of Richard II., represents one of the Ostmen or Danish lords of Ireland as having, when he saw the English fleet approaching in the distance, placed a chain across that part of the harbour where his possessions lay, that he might divert the ships to some other quarter, and so save his lands from the danger of depredation from the invaders. It is said that the king immediately caused this lord and his accomplices to be arrested as rebels against the authority of their sovereign, and that, after being tried in what he called the king's court, they were all executed under the sentence of high treason. Thus the English king began by assuming that he was already in possession of the sovereignty. Immediately after they had landed, earl Strongbow did homage to king Henry for the earldom of Leinster, and formally surrendered into his hands the city of Waterford, the custody of which the king gave to Robert fitz Bernard. Soon after, a new deputation arrived from the people of Wexford, who delivered into his hands their prisoner Robert fitz Stephen. The king at least pretended to give ear to their accusations, and, after severely reprimanding the delinquent, ordered him to be closely confined in Reginald's Tower. The day after Henry landed, Dermot mac Carthy, prince of Desmond, came to the king, did homage for his territory, and submitted to pay the king a tribute, and at the same time surrendered to him his city of Cork, which was immediately entrusted to the charge of an English governor, with a sufficient garrison.

* The dates of the king's progresses, while in Ireland, are furnished most accurately by the Chronicle of Benedict of Peterborough.

The king then marched with his formidable army in pompous array to Lismore, and there gave directions for building a castle. From thence he proceeded to Cashel, where he was received by the archbishop, who could not refuse obedience to a papal bull. He was met on the banks of the Suir by O'Brian, king of Thomond, who did the same homage as Dermot of Desmond had done, and surrendered his city of Limerick. His example was followed by the king of Ossory, O'Faolan king of the Desies, and most of the inferior chiefs of Munster; and they were all received with favour, treated with munificent hospitality, and dismissed with gifts, and they returned home impressed with a profound opinion of the power, magnificence, and generosity of Henry king of England. He then proceeded to Wexford, and took formal possession of the town and territory; and there he allowed his barons to come before him and intercede for Robert fitz Stephen, and he not only set the brave adventurer at liberty, but restored him to his Irish possessions, and having taken Wexford into his own hands, granted the remainder to him and his heirs to hold in fee of the crown of England. Having thus so far arranged every thing at his pleasure, garrisoning the principal strong towns, Limerick, Cork, Waterford, and Wexford, with English soldiers, and having received the submission of nearly all Munster, the king prepared to march to Dublin, to take formal possession of that city, surrendered to him by earl Strongbow.

Henry's progress through Ossory was slow and ostentatious, his whole army marching in battle array, so as to excite the admiration, at the same time that it worked upon the terror, of the natives. As he went along, the native chiefs came in from every side to submit to his sovereignty, and among them appeared O'Carrol of Orgial, one of the most powerful chiefs of the northern division of the island, and even Tiernan O'Ruarc, prince of Breffny, whose feud with Dermot had been the original cause of the entrance of the Normans into the island, and who now, after having made himself remarkable for the obstinacy with which he resisted the invaders, at length deserted the banner of O'Connor. The king reached Dublin about Martinmass.

At Dublin, which had now become a flourishing city, rivalling London in its commerce, the English king held his court with still greater magnificence. As no building then

existed there of sufficient dimensions, they built him a large hall of timber and platted twigs, outside the city, by St. Martin's church. Here he celebrated the great festival of Christmas, attended by a crowd of Irish kings and chieftains, who were as much flattered by the personal attentions shown to them as they were awed and wonderstruck by the display of riches and power. Giraldus tells us that these Irish chiefs were astonished at the abundance of king Henry's table, and that it was on this occasion that the English king taught them to eat crane's flesh, which previously they had held in abhorrence.

Although all the Irish chiefs of Munster and Connaught had come in to the English on their march to Dublin, awed by the imposing pomp of the English army, King O'Connor resisted, and he had raised the forces of Connaught, and taken a strong position on the banks of the Shannon to oppose the entry of the English into his territory; when Hugh de Lacy and William fitz Aldehn were sent against him they found that it was impossible to dislodge him. According to Giraldus, O'Connor agreed to a conference, at which he consented to acknowledge the sovereignty of the king of England, and swore fealty to king Henry; but the other historians say that he preserved his independence, and that the king, hindered from pursuing him at that time, by the inclemency of the season and the state of the roads, proposed to march against him in the spring with the resolution of reducing all that part of Ireland to obedience. The chiefs of Ulster also refused to enter into any conditions with the invaders. Yet the historian last quoted marks the obsequious attendance of the other Irish chiefs on Henry's court at Dublin as the moment of fulfilment of a prophecy that went under the name of Merlin, which intimated that king Henry II. should be the conqueror of Ireland.

The clergy of Ireland are represented as acting in general with more obsequiousness even than the laity. It is stated that there was no archbishop in the island until the middle of the twelfth century, when, in the year 1152, a papal legate brought four palls,* which were distributed to four dioceses, the metropolitan sees of which were fixed at Ardmach, Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam, the archbishop of Ardmach being looked upon as the primate of Ireland. The English chroniclers represent all the four archbishops, with their twenty-nine suffra-

* Girald. Cambr. Topogr. Hibern. Distinc. iii. c. 17.

gan bishops, as coming forwards not only to do fealty to Henry as their temporal king, but as each confirming to the king his right of sovereignty by a written charter under their several seals, which charters the king carried away with him and subsequently transmitted to Rome.

Anxious, under the various difficulties with which he was at this moment beset, to conciliate the court of Rome, as well as to bind the Irish clergy to his cause, one of Henry's first acts was to call a general council or synod of the Irish prelates to deliberate on the reformation of the Irish church. They met at Cashel, early in the year 1172, and were assisted by some English and Welsh prelates, who attended on the part of the king. The primate of Ireland, Gelasius, (or, as he is called in Irish, Giolla mac Liag) archbishop of Armagh, was absent, but he sent his excuse, and is stated by Giraldus to have concurred in all the acts of this synod, over which Christian, bishop of Lismore, presided in his quality of papal legate. Seven principal decrees, passed in this synod, show us the degree of reformation for which it was thought just by the pope to deliver over an independent king to be invaded and forcibly subdued by a foreign ruler. The first required that marriage should be restricted within the canonical regulations; for we are told by the old English chroniclers* that the Irish at this time not only contracted marriages within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity, but that many of them had as many wives as they liked. The second decree related to the baptism of children, which was to be performed in the font within the church, and ordered that infants should be catechized before the doors of the church. We are informed by the old writers that this decree was called for by a custom which had taken root in various parts of Ireland, that as soon as a child was born, its father, or any other person, immediately dipped it three times in water, and if it were the child of a rich man it was dipped three times in milk, after which the water or milk was thrown out among other refuse of the house;† an irregular kind of baptism which

of course the church could not admit. The third decree of this council required the regular payment of tithes to the church which many had previously not paid at all, and never thought of paying. The fourth decree exempted all ecclesiastical lands and property connected with them from all exactions of laymen; and forbade especially that any of the Irish chiefs, or nobles, or powerful men, or their sons with their families, should exact as formerly victuals and hospitality, or entertainments, in the ecclesiastical districts, or presume to extort them by force; and providing further that "that detestable food which used to be required by the neighbouring chieftains four times a year from manors belonging to the churches" should be discontinued. The next decree conferred another immunity on the clergy, exempting them from any share in the payment of the eric, or blood-fine, which, according to the Irish law, the kindred of a layman convicted of homicide were compelled to pay to the family of the slain. The two other decrees of the synod of Cashel related to the making of wills, so that the property should be fairly divided between the wife of the deceased, his heirs-at-law, and the church, and to the adoption in Ireland of the forms of service and religious rites according to the observation of the church in England and other catholic countries.*

Besides this ecclesiastical synod, we learn from Roger of Wendover, that king Henry held a council (or 'curia regis') at Lismore; and another chronicler, Roger Hoveden, tells us that he held one at Waterford. In the council at Lismore the king obliged his English subjects in Ireland to promise to observe in all their transactions the laws of England. It appears also that in course of time the benefit of the English laws was granted as a favour to many of the great Irish families and their dependents within the limits of the English rule.

The unusual turbulence of the weather had cut off all communication with England during a great part of the winter, and obliged the English to remain in inaction, Strongbow at Kildare, where he held his court, and king Henry at Dublin, where he still remained at the festival of the purification (the 2nd of February). The king of Connaught, we are told, at length acknowledged the feudal sovereignty of the monarch of England, on which terms he was allowed to

* Benedict of Peterborough, Roger Hoveden, John of Bromton, &c.

† Mos enim prius erat per diversa loca Hyberniam, quod statim cum puer nasceretur, pater ipsius vel quilibet alius eum ter mergeret in aqua; et si divitis filius fuit, ter mergeretur in lacte. Postea vero solebunt aquam illam vel lac illud in cloacis suis vel in aliis locis immundis projicere.—Benedict of Peterborough, De Vit. Hen. II. vol. i. p. 30.

* The account of this synod is given in Giraldus Cambrensis, Hibern. Expugn. lib. i. cc. 33, 34.

retain his kingdom; but he proudly refused to pass the Finn, the boundary of his dominions, and thither Hugh de Lacy and William fitz Aldelm were sent to take his allegiance. The king confirmed earl Strongbow in the possession of Leinster as another fief of the English crown; and he bestowed the kingdom of Meath upon Hugh de Lacy, one of his favourites in whom he placed great confidence. The chiefs of Ulster still scornfully refused to acknowledge the superiority of a stranger; yet Henry made a conditional disposal of their kingdom, in a grant of Ulster to John de Courcy, on the anticipation that at some future period he should be able to obtain possession of it.

The king's fleet remained still at Waterford, and Henry becoming daily more anxious to receive news from England and from the continent, prepared to leave Dublin and to move with his army towards that place. Before he left Dublin, which seems, after its numerous sieges and massacres, to have been almost deserted by its Danish inhabitants, the king granted that city to be held of him and his heirs to the citizens of Bristol, who were to inhabit it as their own, and to enjoy in it freely and fully all the municipal rights and privileges they had been accustomed to enjoy as citizens of Bristol.* He gave the military custody of Dublin to Hugh de Lacy, leaving with him Robert fitz Stephen, Meiler fitz Henry, and Miles fitz David, and on Ash-Wednesday, which that year fell on the first of March, he entered Wexford, where he remained till Mid-Lent. At that time messengers at length came from England and Normandy, bringing alarming intelligence that new confederations were in formation against king Henry, and that the two cardinals sent to investigate the circumstances connected with the death of Becket had already reached his Norman dominions, and had summoned him to appear before them on pain of laying his kingdom under an interdict. The king at once relinquished his project of remaining in Ireland during the summer to turn his arms again king O'Connor and the inhabitants of Ulster, and made a hurried preparation for his departure. He made further grants of land to those of his followers who were willing to

settle in Ireland, and gave hasty directions for the building of some castles. While remaining at Wexford, he had allured from the service of earl Strongbow some of the bravest of the first adventurers, such as Raymund le Gros, Miles de Cogan, and William Maskarel, whom he received with favour at his own court, and rewarded with lands and posts of honour. Wexford was given to the charge of William fitz Aldelm, under whom were Philip de Hastings, and Philip de Braose; and he entrusted Waterford to Humfrey de Bohun, with Robert fitz Bernard, and Hugh de Gundville as his subordinates. Having finished these arrangements, king Henry went on board his fleet at day-break on Easter-day, the 16th of April, and arrived the same day in Milford Haven. He landed at Portfinnan, and thence walked on foot with pious humility, supporting himself on a pilgrim's staff, to St. David's, where the canons of the church came out to receive him in solemn procession at the White Gate.

Before his sudden recall from Ireland, king Henry had made the best dispositions in his power for its future government. He had given the high office of Justiciary of Ireland, as well as that of lord constable, to Hugh de Lacy, whom he was raising up as a balance to the too great power of earl Strongbow. Strongbow himself is understood to have received the appointment of lord marshal. Bertram de Vernon was made high steward, and the office of king's butler was bestowed on a kinsman of the martyred Thomas Becket, Theobald Walter, the ancestor of the Butlers, earls of Ormond. The king further directed that a castle should be built at Dublin, which was henceforth to be the seat of the English government in Ireland; and it was provided by an express statute, afterwards known as the "statute of Henry fitz Empress," that in case of the sudden demise of the chief governor of Ireland, the other officers should be empowered to elect a successor, who was to exercise the full power and authority of his office, until the royal pleasure could be further known.

The good effect of these provisions was, however, counteracted by the position in which the island had been necessarily left by the king's hasty departure, before he had been able to do more than half perfect his conquest. It was no longer a struggle between a handful of invaders and a number of native chieftains on whom they had thrown themselves in the character of freebooters;

* The charter giving Dublin to the citizens of Bristol, is printed from the original in the municipal archives of Dublin, by Leland, *History of Ireland*, vol. i. p. 81. It appears, from a later document, that the king chartered Waterford to its old Danish citizens, the Ostmen, who, at the same time, received the laws and customs of England.

but there was still one of the four provinces, Connaught, in hostility to the English government, and another, Ulster, set it at defiance. The position thus held by the population of one-half of Ireland, encouraged turbulence and disaffection in the other; and this disaffection furnished a sufficient excuse for tyranny and insolence on the part of the English governors.

The first outbreak arose from the grant of Meath to Hugh de Lacy. It was naturally a sore grief to the native Irish, that the old appanage of their monarchy, which contained the seat of their ancient glory, should be given into the hands of strangers; and they were likely to feel, with double poignancy, the acts of violence or extortion committed in this district. We have seen that Roderic O'Connor had seized upon Meath in his war with king Dermot, and that he had placed over one division of it Tiernan O'Ruarc, whom Giraldus terms, "the one-eyed king of Meath," and who had made his submission, in due form, to king Henry. Shortly after the king's departure a quarrel arose between O'Ruarc and Hugh de Lacy, from some cause arising out of the rival claims to the sovereignty of Meath; and a day and place were fixed for a pacific meeting, in which the former might make his complaint in person. The place was a hill called O'Ruarc's hill—some writers say it was the celebrated hill of Tara—and, oaths and sureties having been mutually taken, it was agreed that O'Ruarc should meet Hugh de Lacy and Maurice fitz Gerald on the top of the hill, attended only by an interpreter, and unarmed, except the swords of the two English knights, and the axe which O'Ruarc, like his countrymen, usually carried in his hand. The other attendants, on each part, were, by agreement, moved to a distance, O'Ruarc's men being placed in a woody valley on one side.

We learn, from the narrative of Giraldus, that a nephew of Maurice fitz Gerald, named Gryffyth, attended this meeting, and was left in command of De Lacy's guard. This man, who was a brave and experienced knight, had dreamt, in the night before the conference, that he had seen a multitude of wild boars rush from the woods upon Hugh de Lacy and his uncle Maurice, and that one of them, far larger and more savage than the rest, would have torn them to pieces with his teeth, had not he stepped in opportunely, and slain the monster with his spear. This dream had made a strong impression on

Gryffyth's mind, and he could not divest it of the suspicion that some act of treachery was meditated by the Irish prince. Anxiously occupied with this idea, he had chosen seven knights of his own kindred, with whose valour he was well acquainted, and with him at their head, they approached as near as possible to the hill, pretending to be amusing themselves with tilting at each other, and thus rode from one side to another, with shields raised, and spears in the rest, wheeling sometimes almost round the spot where the chiefs were in conference, but at a sufficient distance to escape observation from either party.

Meanwhile O'Ruarc pressed his complaints with so much earnestness that, receiving no satisfactory answer, the dispute proceeded to high words, and at length the Irish chief, in great anger, made an excuse for retiring to the brow of the hill, and there beckoned his men from the wood below. It appears that Maurice fitz Gerald also had conceived some suspicions, and he had remained during the conference in a watchful posture, with his sheathed sword resting on his knee, and his hand on the hilt; and when he now saw O'Ruarc returning, all pale and agitated, with troubled and hurried strides, his axe raised in the air, he drew his sword, and advanced to meet him, calling out, at the same time, to Hugh de Lacy to save himself. But O'Ruarc had already aimed one terrible blow at his intended victim, which, falling on the interpreter, who had rushed between them, felled him to the ground; and Hugh de Lacy himself twice fell to the earth in his attempts to avoid the succeeding strokes of the Irish axe, and only escaped through the courage of Maurice fitz Gerald, who parried off the deadly weapon as well as he could with his sword. Gryffyth, and his seven companions, warned of the danger by Maurice's shouts, now approached; and, at the same time, the Irish, who were on foot, came to the assistance of their prince, and, daunted at the sight of a party of knights in armour and mounted, gave him a horse that he might fly. O'Ruarc was now alarmed for his own personal safety, and was preparing to effect his escape, when Gryffyth rode up as he was mounting, and with one desperate plunge of his spear, thrust it through the prince and his courser, and both fell dead on the spot. Three of his familiars, who brought him his horse, were also slain in their attempt to rescue him, and the rest of the Irish having taken to flight, they were

closely pursued by Gryffyth and his knights, and a great number of them miserably slaughtered before they found a shelter in the woods.

The English treated the body of O'Ruarc as that of a traitor. They cut off his head on the spot where he had fallen, and carrying it and his body to Dublin, they placed the former over the town gate, and gibbeted the latter, with the feet upwards, on the north side of the city—"a woful spectacle," to use the words of the native annalist, "to the Irish." The head was subsequently sent to England to king Henry. The Irish chronicles give no circumstantial account of O'Ruarc's death; they only tell us that he was treacherously slain by Hugh de Lacy and Donald, son of Annadh O'Ruarc, one of his own tribe. The son of Annadh O'Ruarc holds rather a disgraceful place in the Irish annals of this year as the ally of the English in plundering and massacring his countrymen. The death of the old enemy of king Dermot, one of the champions of Irish independence, appears to have exasperated both parties, and to have spread disaffection widely among the Irish chieftains who had before professed obedience to their new masters. Among other destructive raids perpetrated by various parties of plunderers during the year, we are informed that the people of Anally (the county of Longford) and the neighbouring districts, were "treacherously" plundered by the son of Annadh O'Ruarc, and the English, who took much cattle and booty; and that afterwards they marched to Ardagh, plundered all the country, and slew Donald O'Ferrall, the chief of Anally. This was probably a continuation of the feud with the family of O'Ruarc.

In one of these plundering raids, the arms of Strongbow experienced a disgrace which they had not suffered before since the English adventurers landed in Ireland. The earl had taken up his residence at Ferns, the ancient capital of the kings of Leinster, and he there, soon after the departure of king Henry, solemnized the marriage of his daughter with Robert de Quincy, who received as her dower a territory in the county of Wexford, called the Duffreys. Robert was subsequently appointed by his father-in-law to the highest offices of the feudal earldom, those of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster. Shortly after this appointment, one of the chiefs of Leinster, named O'Dempsey O'Fally, having refused to attend Strongbow's court, the latter marched an army into his territory, which he ravaged cruelly, and

then returned with a great quantity of plunder. As they passed a defile, on their way towards Kildare, when the earl, with a portion of the army, had made his way through without interruption, not aware even of the presence of an enemy, the Irish chieftain, who had been hovering unperceived upon their rear, suddenly fell on the division which marched with the standard-bearer of Leinster, and, at the first onset, Robert de Quincy was slain, and the earl's standard was captured and carried away by the enemy.

At this moment the dominions of the king of England were in almost as great confusion as those which he had so recently entrusted to the management of his feudal dependants in Ireland. The pope and the church had been appeased for the murder of Becket, and the king received a papal confirmation of all that he had done to conquer the Irish and force them to be better catholics. But this important conciliation was no sooner affected than the English monarch was called to exert all his strength against his own rebellious sons, who, urged on by their mother, queen Eleanor, and by the king of France, laid claim to a portion of their father's dominions on the continent, while some of his turbulent barons at home leagued with the king of Scotland and the count of Flanders to stir up troubles in England. King Henry, who was in France making head against this formidable confederation, dispatched pressing orders to earl Strongbow to hasten to his assistance, and bring a reinforcement to his army; and the earl obeyed without hesitation, and was rewarded on his arrival with the custody of the important castle of Gisors.

The departure of Strongbow left the English forces in Ireland considerably weakened, and the alarming reports which were brought over of the increasing embarrassments of the English monarch, encouraged the Irish in the hope of being able to throw off his yoke. The native chiefs disavowed the submissions they had made to king Henry at the end of the preceding year, and seemed on the point of uniting in a general revolt; O'Connor also began to lift up his head; and, to crown all, a general synod of the clergy and chief laity of Ireland was held at Tuam, in Connaught, over which king O'Connor himself and the archbishop of Tuam presided, and the object of which appears to have been to supersede the acts of the synod called by king Henry a few months before. The Irish annalists, who record the synod of Tuam, pass over in silence the previous synod of Cashel.

CHAPTER XII.

JEALOUSIES AND FEUDS AMONG THE ENGLISH BARONS IN IRELAND.—DEATH OF STRONGBOW.



FEUDES and jealousies now began also to show themselves among the English leaders, nourished by the ambition of one or two individuals, and incipient rivalry between the original invaders and those who had since been brought in by the king. These afforded new encouragement to the dissatisfied native chieftains who sought to recover their independence, as well as to those whose only motive was the love of disorder and plunder. It happened, unfortunately, that the jealousy alluded to existed between the two barons to whom Strongbow, on his departure, had entrusted the chief command, Hervy de Montmaurice and Raymund le Gros. The latter, who was second in command, was popular with the soldiery, to whose faults even he was indulgent, and with whom he mixed almost as one of themselves, while Hervy was proud, and a strict enforcer of discipline, and had made himself obnoxious to the army by the rigour with which he restrained his soldiers from plundering. Hervy was of a temper that beheld with impatience anything like a rivalry of his own power, and he was soon jealous of the popularity of his subordinate; while the latter, confident in the affections of the army, and in his own superior military talents, felt aggrieved at the suspicious coldness of his superior. These sentiments hindered the two chiefs from acting cordially together, and they might soon have led to more serious results, had they not been, in some degree, checked by the return of earl Strongbow to his government.

King Henry, who had defeated the schemes of his enemies with almost as much rapidity as they had been formed, and had already received some intimation of the threatening position of his affairs in Ireland, sent for the earl to Rouen, where he was then holding his court, and communicated to him his intention of entrusting the entire command of his Irish dominions to his hands. Strongbow is said to have expressed

some reluctance to undertake an office of so much difficulty, and to have suggested that Raymund should be joined with him in the command. But to this the king, who appears to have been suspicious of Raymund's ambitious views, objected, but he told the earl that he might make use of him in any capacity he should think advisable, and then dispatched him to Dublin, in the new quality of viceroy of his kingdom of Ireland, bestowing on him at the same time the city of Waterford, with a castle recently erected near Wicklow. Strongbow accordingly arrived at Dublin, and immediately took into his own custody that city as well as Waterford and Wexford, the latter of which he had already possessed; and by the king's directions he sent over to him in Normandy Robert fitz Bernard with the garrison of Waterford, Robert fitz Stephen and Maurice de Prendergast from Dublin, with Hugh de Lacy, Miles de Cogan, and other knights, who seemed to have incurred some portion of Henry's suspicions.

The loss of so many soldiers thus sent out of the island considerably weakened Strongbow's military force, and to add to his difficulties he had soon spent the money he had brought with him to support the expenses of his government, and the army which remained, withheld by Henry de Montmaurice's strict discipline from enriching themselves by plundering the Irish, became mutinous from want of pay. The soldiers presented themselves in a tumultuous body before the viceroy, they complained in a rude manner of the conduct of their commander, and threatened that, if he were not replaced by Raymund, they would either return to their native country, or enter into the service of the Irish chiefs who were already arming against his authority. Strongbow saw well that he had no alternative, and acceded to their request; and knowing that their object was plunder, and that it was not in his power to pacify them by giving them their arrears of pay, he allowed them to march under Raymund into Offaly, under the pretence of chastising the insubordination of the petty princes of that district, which

overrun and plundered almost without resistance. They thus proceeded as far as Lismore, which with the surrounding district afforded them a rich booty. Returning with this by the coast, they found some ships at anchor, in which they embarked a large portion of their plunder, and sent it under the charge of a knight named Adam de Hereford by sea to Waterford. The citizens of Cork, who had obtained information of this transaction, had in the mean time armed a fleet of two-and-thirty small vessels and sent it out to intercept the convoy; and meeting with them at the mouth of the river, a sharp engagement ensued, in which, however, the deadly cross-bows and iron corslets of the English were more than a match for the Irish slings and axes, and Adam de Hereford not only drove away his assailants and secured the plunder under his charge, but he carried triumphantly into the harbour of Waterford eight of the enemy's vessels. The commander of the Cork squadron had been slain in the battle by a brave young Welshman named Philip.

A similar success had crowned the efforts of their comrades on shore. Raymund had received intelligence of the hostile conduct of the citizens of Cork, which city had been taken possession of by Mac Carthy, prince of Desmond, when the necessities of king Henry had compelled him to withdraw the English garrison; and he hastened with a select body of his cavalry to support his countrymen. Mac Carthy with a similar solicitude for the success of his vassals of Cork, had raised the men of Desmond, and he and Raymund met unexpectedly on the way. After a short action, in which the loss appears to have been small on either side, the Irish were obliged to retreat to the woods, and Raymund marched triumphantly into Waterford, with an immense drove of cattle and sheep which had been carried off from the territory of Lismore. Other petty enterprises of this kind followed, which turned uniformly to the advantage of the English, and increased the popularity of Raymund.

The latter, encouraged by this circumstance, now began to entertain higher aims. It has already been stated how Robert de Quincy, bringing up the rear of the earl's army in its return from Ossory, had been slain by the Irish, and lost the standard of Leinster. He left his young wife, Strongbow's sister Basilea, with child, and she soon afterwards gave birth to a daughter. Ray-

mund had it appears conceived a passion for the lady Basilea, and now, encouraged by his good fortunes, he ventured to demand of the earl her hand in marriage, with the office of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster during the minority of Robert de Quincy's infant daughter. Strongbow refused to listen to Raymund's request, and the latter resigned the command of the army in disgust, and returned to Wales, taking with him several of the bravest of his companions in arms.* The constablenesship was restored to his rival Hervy de Montmaurice.

The loss of Raymund was soon felt in Ireland. The year 1173 had been spent in such petty warfare as we have related above, and it was now 1174, when Hervy de Montmaurice, anxious to distinguish himself by some successes as a commander, recommended to the earl the invasion of Munster, in anticipation, as he said, of an intended revolt in that quarter of a threatening aspect. Strongbow approved of his counsel, and they marched together, with a powerful army, to Cashel, where they encamped. According to the Irish accounts, king O'Connor raised the army of Connaught, and marched to the assistance of the people of Munster. Hervy and Strongbow, having ascertained the formidable numbers of the enemy, agreed to send to Dublin for a reinforcement from the garrison there, which consisted chiefly of Ostmen who had entered the English pay. This party appears to have marched along carelessly, until, passing a night at Ossory, they were cut off by Donald O'Brian, prince of Thomond, who had marched with the greatest rapidity and secrecy at the head of a part of the old clan of the Dalcassians, and slew a great part of them as they were sleeping, unarmed, in their beds. Earl Strongbow, under the sudden vexation caused by this disaster, made a hasty retreat, with Hervy de Montmaurice and his army, to Waterford, and shut himself up within the walls of that city. The Irish magnified this check into a great victory gained over Strongbow's forces, and the exaggerated reports spread over the island became the signal for

* There is some confusion in the history of Raymund's departure for Wales. The Anglo-Norman rhymer, who has recorded the details here given relating to the cause of Raymund's disgust, has evidently fallen into error in placing it before Strongbow's recall from Ireland to assist the king in Normandy. Giraldus (*Hibern. Expugn. lib. ii, c. 3*) glosses over Raymund's quarrel with the earl, and merely tells us that Raymund was recalled to Wales by the death of his father, William fitz Gerald.

a general revolt. Several even of the chieftains of Leinster, who had made the warmest professions of their fidelity to the English, disclaimed their engagements, and declared their devotion to the national cause. Among them was, it is said, Donald Kavenagh, so celebrated for his steadfastness in the cause of his father, king Dermot, and who had given so many proofs of his attachment to the English interests. King Roderic was, at the same time, active in his attempts to unite the brave chiefs of Ulster against the common enemy; and, collecting his own army of Connaught, he marched against the English settlements in Meath, ravaged the territory of Hugh de Lacy, destroyed his castles, particularly that of Trim, and drove Hugh Tyrrel, who had the military command at Meath, to seek shelter, with his soldiers, in Dublin.

Strongbow, however, alarmed at the spread of the revolt, and perceiving that the ill-success of the plans of Hery de Montmaurice had increased the dissatisfaction of his own troops, had already prepared for the emergency by recalling their favourite commander. A messenger had been dispatched to Raymund in Wales, urging him to lose no time in returning to Ireland, and offering him the hand of his sister, with the offices held by her late husband. Raymund was, no doubt, prepared for such a proposal; he immediately embarked in fifteen ships, having collected, among his own kindred, thirty knights, with a hundred horsemen, and three hundred choice Welsh archers; and the hearts of the English in Waterford were cheered when they saw them sail majestically into their harbour. Raymund, restored to the command of the army in Ireland, escorted the earl from Waterford to Wexford, probably to check, by their proximity, the spirit of disaffection in Leinster; and there his nuptials with the lady Basilea were celebrated with great pomp, her brother giving unto her as a dower considerable grants of lands, including Fothard, Hy-Drone, and Glascarrig. At the same time Strongbow made a general distribution of lands to his followers; he gave O'Barthie to Hery de Montmaurice; he granted Fernegenall to Maurice de Prendergast, who also possessed the district of Hy-Kinsellagh; to Meiler fitz Henry he gave Carberry; and Maurice fitz Gerald received Wicklow, and the territory of Mac Kelan.

According to the historian Giraldus, Raymund had arrived at Waterford in a critical

moment. An extensive conspiracy had been formed for the extirpation of the English, and the people of Waterford are said to have been on the point of rising against Strongbow and his garrison. Repressed by the formidable accession thus brought to the Anglo-Irish forces, no sooner had the latter left them to march to Wexford, than the rage of the citizens broke forth. The small garrison now left there suspected no evil, and were easily taken off their guard. Their commander crossed the Suir, with a few attendants, in a boat, and this was seized upon as the signal for the outbreak. He, and his companions, were killed by the mariners, and when this was known, the townsmen rose, and massacred the English without distinction of age or sex. The soldiers of the garrison, however, did not lose their courage, for, with the exception of some who were slain unarmed, they fortified themselves in Reginald's Tower, and made such a vigorous defence that they not only beat off their assailants, but ultimately made themselves masters of the city.

From his nuptials at Wexford, Raymund was called suddenly to resist the invasion of O'Connor, who, after over-running Meath, had advanced near to the walls of Dublin. The Irish clans, however, were as usual more intent upon securing their plunder, than of pursuing their successes, and, before the English had arrived, O'Connor's army had broken up and separated, each chief returning to his respective home. Some parties, who, perhaps more heavily laden with their spoils than the others, lingered behind, were cut to pieces by Raymund's soldiers, so that little was left for the latter to do beyond restoring the English settlers to their possessions. But the war dwindled into a series of skirmishes and reprisals, in one of which, early in 1175, Donald Kavenagh was slain. In another, Marcus O'Melachlin, the Irish prince of East Meath, was captured by the English, who hanged him at Trim. The spirit of disaffection was thus soon repressed in the province of Leinster, and Strongbow and Raymund were enabled to turn their attention to the south, leaving Hugh Tyrrel to rebuild the castles which had been destroyed by the Irish.

The province of Munster presented an extraordinary scene of turbulence. Donald O'Brian, king of Thomond, who had obtained possession of Limerick, and set the English power at defiance, was on the other hand engaged in domestic feuds with his own

kinsmen and with the clans who owed allegiance to him. The Irish annals of this year state that two O'Brians were seized by Donald in their own house at Castle-Conell, and there deprived of their eyes by his order; and mention several chiefs "treacherously" slain by his contrivance, among whom was a son of the prince of Ossory. On the other side he had given some offence to the king of Connaught, who marched an army into Munster, and ravaged Thomond, compelling its prince to retreat before him. It appears that it was the prince of Ossory, who, as holding the southern border of Leinster, claimed the immediate protection of its sovereign, who drew the English on the present occasion against Donald O'Brian, and he acted as a guide to the small but resolute army which marched under the command of Raymund to undertake the siege of Limerick.* The king of Ossory, who had first given pledges for his fidelity, marched first, and the English commander followed, at the head of six hundred men. In this order they proceeded through wood and over plain till they approached the city of Limerick, which, built on an island in the Shannon, besides being strongly fortified, was surrounded by the wide channel of the river. When the army reached the banks, they found that the bridges had been destroyed, and there was no appearance of a ford. Two soldiers swam across, and returned, but one was drowned in the passage back. The troops hesitated, alarmed at the rapidity of the current, upon which the brave Meiler fitz Henry, Raymund's cousin, spurred his horse forward, and shouting "Onward, in the name of St. David!" dashed into the stream. He was followed by two or three others, and they succeeded with difficulty in reaching the opposite bank, where they were exposed to a shower of missiles from the walls and from the elevated ground bordering on the river. The English army still hesitated to follow, and then Raymund himself rode up to the front and led the way. The whole army rushed in after their intrepid leader, and crossed the river in a mass, with the loss of only two men. The people of Limerick had hastened to the water-side to hinder them from landing, but they were so astonished

at Raymund's intrepidity, and at the courage which animated his followers, that they took flight without striking a blow; and the English pressed on them so closely that they entered the gates together with them, and, after great slaughter took possession of the city, which was given up to all the excesses of a victorious soldiery.* Limerick was thus captured on a Tuesday, and Giraldus states as a curious coincidence that Wexford, Waterford, and Dublin, had all been taken by the English on the same day of the week.†

It was at this conjuncture that king Henry, hoping by its promulgation to strengthen his power in Ireland, made public the bull of pope Adrian, since confirmed by his successor in the papacy, granting the sovereignty of Ireland to the English monarch. Two commissioners, a layman and an ecclesiastic, William fitz Aldelm and Nicholas prior of Wallingford, were sent over to Ireland to read this document before a synod of Irish bishops, who offered no opposition to the orders of the sovereign pontiff. Another task imposed on the two commissioners was to observe the state of Ireland, and ascertain as far as possible the causes of the increasing disorders in its government. They had for this purpose entered into communication with some of the English barons, and more especially with Hervy de Montmaurice, the rival of Raymund, by whom perhaps they were in some degree prejudiced in their judgment. Hervy had a little before this period—according to Giraldus, with the secret hope of having a more certain cover for his plots against his rival in the pretended friendship of a family alliance—married Raymund's kinswoman, Nesta, daughter of Maurice fitz Gerald; and to draw still more closely the family alliance, the earl is stated, by Raymund's procurator, to have given his own daughter to Maurice fitz Gerald's eldest son William. Maurice himself had returned from Wales, and received some new grants in Ireland.

Perhaps the pretended conspiracy against Raymund was a pure creation of the enemies of Hervy de Montmaurice; but be this as it may, the reports carried over to king

* So, at least, we are informed by the Anglo-Norman rhymet, —

E li reis de Osserie
Devant prime les guie,
Vers Monestere les guie,
Sur reis O'Brien cel ost mena.

* The metrical narrative of the Anglo-Norman rhymet ends abruptly in the middle of this attack upon Limerick, owing to the loss of the latter part of the unique manuscript which contains it.

† Giraldus observes with a pun, which is only understood in the Latin, "Nec mirum tamen vel rationi dissonum, si Martis potissimum die Martia negotia sunt completa."—Hib. m. Expugn. lib. ii. c. 8.

Henry in Normandy represented him as not only turning the army of Ireland into a host of freebooters and plunderers, who excited rebellion on every side by their unprovoked depredations (which was probably not far from the truth); but they intimated that he was actuated by ambitious views, which led him to aspire not only to establish himself as the independent sovereign of Limerick, but to grasp in anticipation at the sovereignty of Ireland. These charges would naturally lead us to believe that the expedition against Limerick was not undertaken with the entire approbation of Strongbow, and in fact that Raymund himself had been driven to it in some measure by the necessity of supporting his own popularity, by keeping the soldiers in action and indulging them in plunder. The king himself now took the alarm, and in the spring of the year 1176 he dispatched four nobles of his court to Ireland, two of whom had authority to return to him with Raymund under their conduct, while the other two were to remain with earl Strongbow and assist him with their counsels.

The king's orders remained without effect, not from Raymund's unwillingness to obey them, but on account of new troubles in Munster. The popular commander was only waiting for a favourable wind, to proceed in company with the two commissioners to the court of king Henry, when intelligence arrived that no sooner had he left Limerick than Donald O'Brian had again raised his head, that he had now surrounded that city with a numerous force, and that the besieged English garrison was already driven to extremities. Strongbow prepared to march such an army as could be spared at the instant to the relief of Limerick, and he had assembled a force of about six hundred men, but when he gave the orders for departure, the soldiers with one accord refused to obey, unless they were led by their favourite general. Strongbow consulted with the king's commissioners, and it was resolved, on account of the emergency of the occasion, that Raymund should be again placed at the head of the army. Raymund affected reluctance, but afterwards consented to return to his post, and he marched immediately with this small army towards Munster. On his way he was joined by the Irish of Ossory and Hy-Kinsellagh, under their two princes, the inveterate enemies of O'Brian of Thomond.

As they proceeded, they learnt that the latter, having abandoned the siege of Lime-

rick as soon as he received intelligence of their approach,* had marched with his whole army to the neighbourhood of Cashel, and there taken up a strong position in a defile through which the English and their allies must necessarily pass. When the latter arrived, they found O'Brian's army, formidable by its numbers, posted behind strong entrenchments, but the English marched at once to the attack, not as usual rushing forward with shouts, but moving slowly and steadily, and almost in silence. The Irish who accompanied them were astonished, and took their coolness for fear, and the prince of Ossory came to the English chiefs to exhort and encourage them, declaring that if they did not on this occasion show their wonted vigour they and their forces would join the enemy. The Irish were, however, soon undeceived, for the English in advance, led by the brave Meiler fitz Henry, threw themselves as usual upon the entrenchments, and, after a short struggle, in which the Irish of Thomond made a desperate resistance, carried everything before them, and O'Brian's army was scattered over the plain in headlong flight. Limerick was saved by this victory; and Donald O'Brian, reduced to despair, demanded an interview with the English leader, to arrange terms of submission. At the same time, O'Connor of Connaught, either to renew his own fealty, or to interpose his good services in favour of O'Brian, begged to be a party to the conference, and descending the Shannon with an escort of boats, he took up his station on the western side of Lough Derg. The prince of Thomond, with his escort, stationed themselves in a wood on the opposite side of the lake; and Raymund and his English took up a position near Killaloe, at an equal distance from both. The result was, that both the Irish princes renewed their oath of allegiance, and gave hostages for its observance. This event was followed by another which turned no less to the advantage of the English. Dermot mac Carthy, prince of Desmond, who had resumed his allegiance to king Henry, was suddenly deposed by his son, and thrown into prison. He sent immediately to the English, claiming their protection, and Raymund marched at once to his

* The Irish annalists pretend that O'Brian had captured Limerick. It is evident, however, that the native authorities exaggerate much the successes of their countrymen, while, in most instances, they pass over their defeats in silence.

assistance. The rebellion was soon subdued, and Mac Carthy restored to his throne, and the first use he made of his power was to cut off his son's head. As a mark of his gratitude for the services of his deliverer, he bestowed upon Raymund a considerable tract of land in the part of Desmond, called Kerry, which Raymund gave to his son Maurice, the founder of the Fitz Maurice family of Kerry.

The submission of the king of Connaught on this occasion, appears to have been nothing more than the confirmation and fulfilment of a treaty made between that prince and the king of England at the Michaelmas of the preceding year. O'Connor, it seems, had formed the same opinion of the unscrupulous predatory character of the English governors and army in Ireland as had been conveyed to the English court, and he determined to seek protection by treating directly with the English monarch. Accordingly, when king Henry held his court at Windsor, on the octaves of St. Michael, 1175, three Irish prelates were ushered into his presence, and there, before the great nobles of the realm, a solemn treaty, or "concord," was entered into between the king of England and the king of Connaught, which was confirmed by a written charter.* By this document the king of England granted to Roderic, king of Connaught, "his liege man," that, "as long as he should serve him faithfully, he should be a king under him, ready at his service, as his man," and that he should hold his land "as well and peaceably as he held it before the lord, the king of England, entered Ireland," under the condition of paying a tribute to him. This tribute was to be a merchantable hide for every tenth head of cattle killed in Ireland. Roderic was to have dominion and jurisdiction over all the rest of the island and its inhabitants, with its kings and princes, with exceptions specified in the sequel of the treaty, and he was bound to oblige them to pay tribute through his hands to the king of England, whose other rights were also to be preserved. The subordinate kings, princes, &c., were to continue in quiet possession of their principalities, as long as they remained faithful to the king of England, and paid their tribute; but, in case any of them should rebel against the king of England, or against king Roderic, and refuse to pay their tribute, or

should depart from their fealty to the king of England, the king of Connaught was then authorized to judge them, and, if necessary, deprive them of their governments and possessions. Should Roderic not be strong enough to enforce his authority in this respect, he was to receive assistance, on demanding it, from the king's constable of Ireland and his army there. It will be seen at once, that though the king of Connaught was, by this agreement, placed in a dependent position, and that the grant was only to himself personally, yet the power left him was very considerable. The treaty goes on to stipulate that if any of the Irish who had fled from "the territory of the king's barons" should desire to return thither, they might do so in peace, either paying the aforesaid tribute as others did, or performing the services they were anciently accustomed to perform for their lands, the choice to be at the will of their lords; and if any of the Irish, who were subjects of the king of Connaught, should refuse to return to him, he might compel them to do so, that they might remain in his land in peace. The king of Connaught, moreover, was empowered to take hostages from all those whom the king of England had committed to him, at the choice of himself and the king of England, which hostages he was to give to the king of England, or to others chosen by him. All those from whom these securities were demanded, were obliged to perform certain annual services to the English crown, by presents of Irish dogs and hawks, articles which were long in great request in other countries; and they were not to detain any person whatsoever, belonging to any land or territory of the English monarch, against his will and commandment.

The territory in Ireland excepted from the power and jurisdiction of king Roderic, described as the domain of the king of England and his barons, is defined in the treaty as consisting of Dublin, with all its appurtenances; Meath, with all its appurtenances, and the absolute dominion over it; Wexford, with all its appurtenances, including the whole of Leinster; and Waterford, with all its appurtenances, as far as Dungarvon, this latter place, and its appurtenances, being included. This was the territory which, in later times, was so well known by the title of the ENGLISH PALE.

Among the witnesses to this charter, ratified in a full council of prelates and barons, appears the name of Laurence archbishop

* This important document is preserved by Benedict of Peterborough, who has inserted it in his *Vit. Hen. II.* vol. i, p. 123.

of Dublin.* It makes the kings of England, for all future time, lords paramount of Ireland; it gives them the fee of the soil, and makes all future monarchs of Ireland but tenants in capite, or vassals, of the English crown. As a first act of his authority, the king of England, in the same council, appointed an Irishman, named Augustine, to the then vacant bishopric of Waterford, and sent him back to Ireland with archbishop Laurence to receive consecration at the hands of the archbishop of Cashel, who was his metropolitan.

The presence of O'Connor at Lough Dearg in the spring of 1176, was perhaps nothing more than a formal caution, in order that, according to the above treaty, the submission and hostages of Donald O'Brian might pass through his hands. After these hostages had been safely lodged in Limerick, and while Raymund was engaged in reducing to obedience the rebellious subjects of Dermot mac Carthy, an event occurred which was likely to have a more important influence on the fate of the English government in England. Earl Strongbow, who had been for some time in a precarious state of health, died at Dublin from a mortification in his foot, in the beginning of June, 1176. The Irish when they heard of his decease were filled with joy; they hated him, because he had been the special instrument of their subjection to foreigners; they pointed him out as the spoiler and profaner of their churches; and they said that he died from a visitation of their saints, it being generally reported among them that in his last illness the earl frequently screamed out that St. Brigid was killing him.

For a time, however, great pains were taken to conceal from the public the loss which the English interests in Ireland had sustained, as it was feared that the intelligence of earl Strongbow's death would be the signal for a general insurrection, if preventive measures were not taken. There

was danger even in conveying the intelligence to Raymund, lest the messenger might fall into the hands of the Irish on the road. After some consultation, however, the lady Basilea, who was in Dublin, wrote a mysterious letter to her husband, in which she informed him that her great tooth, which had ached so long, was at length fallen out, and she there intreated him to return to Dublin with as much speed as possible.

This letter found Raymund in Desmond. He understood its meaning, and hurried to Limerick, where he held a hasty consultation with his companions in arms. It was agreed that, in the extreme necessity of collecting the English army in force about Dublin, it would be impossible to retain possession of the city they were then occupying, and they therefore sent for Donald O'Brian, told him that as he had made his submission and given his hostages, the king of England received them in good faith, would henceforward trust in him as his liegeman, and as a proof of his confidence entrusted the city of Limerick to his custody. O'Brian, with the most profound dissimulation, professed to receive this mark of the royal confidence with the greatest gratitude, and promised on his oath to hold the city faithfully for the king of England. Raymund then marched out with his army, but the soldiers who had formed his rear had hardly passed the river, when the treacherous king of Thomond ordered the bridges to be broken down, and setting fire to the city of Limerick in four different quarters, reduced it to ashes, declaring that he would leave it no longer to be a nest for the reception of foreigners. We are told by Giraldus that the enemies of Raymund endeavoured to represent his conduct on this occasion in an unfavourable light; but that king Henry, whose political wisdom was proverbial, expressed his judgment in reply that the first taking of Limerick by the English was a noble exploit, that the recovery of it was still nobler; but that the abandonment of it in this manner was alone an act of wisdom.

Raymund reached Dublin without meeting with any obstacle in his road; and immediately afterwards the obsequies of earl Strongbow were celebrated with great pomp in the cathedral church of that city, archbishop Laurence officiating at the ceremony. The council at Dublin then proceeded to exercise the important power entrusted to them by Henry's first statutes, by electing a viceroy or lord deputy in earl Richard's

* While in England, on this occasion, Archbishop Laurence narrowly escaped an attempt upon his life. He was at Canterbury in attendance upon the king, and having been requested by the monks to celebrate mass, he was proceeding to the altar dressed in his pontificals, when a madman, hearing of his great holiness, and imagining he would be doing a good act in conferring on him the crown of martyrdom—the English complained that the Irish church had no martyr among its saints—struck him on the head with a large club. The archbishop with difficulty recovered from the effects of the blow, and begged the life of his assailant.

place; and as, in the emergency of the moment, everything seemed to call for the vigour and talents of Raymund, the choice fell unanimously upon him. The king's commissioners, who had now had time to make themselves well acquainted with the state and necessities of the English government in Ireland, concurred in the choice, and they immediately embarked for England, to render an account of their mission to the king.

The necessity of the precautions which had been taken on the death of Strongbow was made evident by troubles which had already broke out in Meath. The castle of Slane was occupied by Richard le Fleming, to whom it had been granted by Hugh de Lacy, and a small garrison of English, who

were hated by the natives for their predatory incursions into the districts of Orgial and Hy-Briuin, and their oppressions of the Irish of Meath in different parts around. The Irish of the Kinel-Owen and of Orgial were at length roused to vengeance, and under the guidance of a chief, who it appears claimed the lordship of Slane by right of descent, surprised the castle, and slew Richard le Fleming and all the English they found there. The other English of the neighbourhood were seized with consternation, and three castles, those of Kells, which had been built during the year, Galtrim, and Derry-Patrick, were abandoned by their garrisons next day, and were quickly taken possession of, and destroyed by the insurgents.

CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM FITZ ALDELM AND HUGH DE LACY GOVERNORS OF IRELAND; INVASION OF ULSTER BY JOHN DE COURCY.



It was evidently the desire of the English monarch to exchange the sanguinary policy of the first governors of Ireland for one that was more pacific and conciliatory towards the natives. But in the attempt to carry out this just and wise design, he had to contend with so many prejudices and interests, that every step he took seemed only to increase the turbulence and confusion that were ravaging that unhappy island. The first invaders and their families had become inured to war and spoliation, and they looked upon pacific measures almost as an infringement of their natural rights, while they regarded all new-comers with jealousy, as men sent to rob them of their just share in the spoils. We shall soon find these sentiments producing fatal effects on the internal condition of Ireland; while the exasperation of all parties produced a succession of mutual injuries between English and Irish, and added to the jealousies which on each side rose among themselves, gradually led to an infinite multitude of personal feuds that were handed down from generation to generation.

Giraldus, the historian, from his own family connection with them, was strongly prejudiced in favour of the first adventurers, and was no favourer of the policy which now guided king Henry's councils. We must not therefore place entire confidence in his stories of the secret intrigues which are said to have deprived Raymund of the favour of his sovereign. Raymund was the representative in its most revolting characteristics of that policy which the king had now resolved to discountenance, and which the death of Strongbow offered him the occasion to change. When the commissioners brought him intelligence of that event, he appointed to the government of Ireland as his justiciary or viceroy, with a train of ten knights of his court, William fitz Aldelm, who was his kinsman by blood; and he sent back with him, to act under his orders, each with a similar train of ten knights, John de Courcy, Robert fitz Stephen, and Miles de Cogan, three of the bravest and most energetic of the barons who had already distinguished themselves on the Irish soil. They had all served the king faithfully in his wars, and he perhaps thought that they were impressed with the necessity of the

policy which was to guide the councils of Fitz Aldelm, and that they shared in his own jealousy of the Geraldines, a jealousy which continued more or less to animate succeeding monarchs to a very late period. The royal letter which accompanied Fitz Aldelm, addressed by the king to "his archbishops, bishops, kings, earls, barons, and all his lieges of Ireland," while it enjoined implicit obedience to the new viceroy, announced Henry's intention as soon as possible to attend to his "great affairs" in that island.

Raymund came with a chosen body of cavalry, chiefly consisting of his own kinsmen, met the new viceroy on the borders of Wexford, and received him with every mark of submission and respect. He immediately went through the ceremony of delivering up to him the towns and cities possessed by the English, and the hostages of the native princes and chiefs of which he had had the custody as temporary governor; and Fitz Aldelm began his administration with a ceremonious progress along the coast to inspect the English towns and garrisons, viewing the mountains of the interior at a distance, and, if we believe Giraldus, gloating secretly on them as the endless source from which he hoped to fill his coffers. This historian informs us that Fitz Aldelm's jealousy and hatred of the great and noble family of the Geraldines was such, that he was not able to conceal it in this his first interview with its earliest ornament, Raymund. When he saw that leader attended by so noble a troop of young men, all of them his nephews, mounted on beautiful horses, and bearing the same coat of arms emblazoned on their shields, he looked with a jealous eye, and as he saw them coursing playfully over the field, he said to one of his own train, in a low voice, "I will shortly check this pride, and disperse their shields." From this moment, adds Giraldus, it was the constant policy, not only of Fitz Aldelm, but of all his successors, to persecute incessantly every branch of this distinguished family.* An occurrence happened at this very moment which furnished William fitz Aldelm with an opportunity of putting it into practice. While he was on his progress, he received

intelligence that Maurice fitz Gerald, whose name is already well known to the reader by the part he acted in the events of the preceding history, and who, by his three sons, was the progenitor of all the great houses of this name in Ireland, had died at Wexford, about the first of September, 1176. The deputy entrapped the sons of the deceased into the surrender of the castle of Wicklow, granted to Maurice fitz Gerald by earl Strongbow, in exchange for the town of Ferns, which was much more exposed to the attacks of a troublesome enemy; and before they were put in possession, a kinsman of his, to whom he had given the custody of Wexford, destroyed the only fort by which the town was defended, in consequence of a bribe, it is said, which he had taken from the Irish chief of Hy-Kinsellagh.

The pacific policy of William fitz Aldelm was ill-suited to the tempers of the men over whom he had to rule. They complained bitterly of the profitless inaction in which they were now obliged to live, and looked back with regret to the more warlike rule of earl Strongbow. They spoke contemptuously of their deputy as an effeminate courtier, who passed his time in sensual enjoyments. When he received the native Irish at his court, soothed their feelings, and listened to their griefs, it was said that they came to give him bribes, and that he thus enriched himself and his effeminate followers; while the hardy warriors, who had won the territory over which he was sent to rule, were all placed in border fortresses, where they were exposed to the labours of defending the English possessions against the insurrection of the natives, without being allowed to repay themselves with plunder, by an occasional inroad into the lands of the neighbouring chiefs. The dissatisfaction at Fitz Aldelm's government increased, until at length some of the English soldiers resolved to join together and at all risks make war upon the Irish.

The foremost of these adventurers was John de Courcy, one of the three who had come over with William fitz Aldelm, with the highest power in Ireland second after the deputy. John de Courcy was, by character, a restless adventurer, remarkable for his personal stature and strength, and for his daring courage, and he had repeatedly protested against the timidity and inactivity of the government at Dublin. He had formerly received from king Henry a conditional grant of the whole of Ulster, but that

* In concluding some observations on the injustice with which this family was treated, Giraldus exclaims, "Qui sunt qui penetrant hostis penetralia? Giraldidæ. Qui sunt qui patriam conservant? Giraldidæ. Qui sunt quos hostes formidant? Giraldidæ. Qui sunt quos livor detractat? Giraldidæ."—Hibern. Expugn. lib. ii. c. 15.

province still remained independent of English rule. Having allured to his standard a few of the English soldiers who were loudest in their complaints of want of pay and want of plunder, he proclaimed his intention of taking forcible possession of the territory which had been granted him. The deputy expressly forbade this unauthorized expedition. But John de Courcy set equally at defiance the orders of his superior, the multitude of the enemies with whom he had to contend, and even the inclemencies of winter, and choosing out of the troops under his command a body of twenty-two knights, and about three hundred soldiers, he departed in the latter days of January, 1177, to conquer a kingdom which had been for ages celebrated for the warlike character of its population.

After a rapid march of three days through Orgial, this adventurous army, suffering severely from hunger and other privations, reached Down on the morning of the fourth day, being the first of February, and made themselves masters of that city with little resistance, for the attack was so unexpected, that the inhabitants are said to have been roused from their beds at day-break by the sound of the English trumpets in their streets. Nevertheless, many of them were slaughtered by the assailants, and the city was plundered and taken possession of by the English, who built a castle, which became John de Courcy's stronghold in his subsequent operations.

When king Henry sent William fitz Aldelm as his deputy to Ireland, he had taken measures to conciliate as much as possible the favour of the church, and he had prevailed upon the pope to send cardinal Vivian as his legate into Ireland, to add by his means the papal authority to his Irish government. The cardinal had, for some cause or other, visited Scotland on his way, and thence proceeding to the coast of Ulster, he had been received with respect by the king of that province, and was still in Down when the city was captured by John de Courcy. Vivian presented himself before the English leader, and expostulated with him on the unprovoked character of his invasion of an unoffending state; he told him that the king of Ulster, Roderic mac Dunlevy, was willing to acknowledge the title of the English monarch, and to pay his share of the tribute, represented to him that the people of Ulster were protected by the treaty between king Henry and Roderic O'Connor,

and besought him to withdraw his soldiers and return to Dublin. John de Courcy listened patiently to the legate, and showed him the reverence due to his sacred character, but he refused to follow his advice. The cardinal, indignant at the injustice of his proceedings, went to the king of Ulster, who had fled in consternation at the unexpected attack on his capital, and advised him to collect his subjects, and resist courageously this unprovoked aggression; and, having given his benediction on their cause, he proceeded on his way to Dublin.

Roderic mac Dunlevy acted upon the advice of the legate, and appealed to his subjects, who soon recovered from their panic. He easily collected a tumultuous force, consisting, according to Giraldus, of not less than ten thousand men, and with these he marched, at the end of a week, to drive the invaders from his capital. When John de Courcy heard of the approach of the Irish, instead of waiting for the attack within his defences, he marched out with his characteristic courage, mixed probably, in this instance, with the provident wisdom of the general, and in a long and obstinate battle the bravery of De Courcy and his knights was eventually triumphant. Among those who distinguished themselves most was Roger le Poer, then a young knight of great promise, whose name will occur frequently in the subsequent history. The slaughter was so great, especially in the flight along the soft ground towards the sea, that, as the pursuers sunk up to their knees in the gory mud, people believed they saw the literal fulfilment of the popular prophecy attributed to St. Columbkille, that the conquerors of Ulster would march up to their knees in blood.

The latter half of the twelfth century was the age in which such prophecies were received by all classes of society with especial credulity, and by none more so than by John de Courcy. There was a prophecy under the name of Merlin, which stated that the first invader of Ulster would be a white knight, sitting on a white horse, carrying birds on his shield; and as De Courcy was of a very fair complexion, and happened to have for his armorial bearings three eagles, the easy addition of a white horse completed the resemblance, and the English commander took the prophecy to himself. He was made to claim, with equal probability, another prophecy of St. Columbkille, which foretold that "a certain pauper and beggar, and, as it were, a fugitive

from other lands, would come to Down with a small band, and make himself master of the city." We are told that De Courcy put so much faith in these pretended documents, that he had always by him, as his surest guide, a book of the prophecies of St. Columbkille written in the Irish tongue. It was at his encouragement, also, that the monk Jocelin composed the life of St. Patrick in Latin.

John de Courcy was now left at liberty for a time to strengthen himself at Down, and to enrich himself and his followers with the plunder of the natives. It is probable that in the interval other English adventurers arrived to serve under his standard. On the 24th of June (the nativity of St. John the Baptist) John de Courcy again defeated, with fearful slaughter, an immense army of the Irish, estimated by Giraldus at fifteen thousand men, and in this battle fell many native chiefs of distinction. Various other partial engagements followed, generally arising from his plundering expeditions, and in which he was not always fortunate, though his personal valour carried him through every danger, and the castle of Down became the terror of the Ultonians.

While John de Courcy was thus occupied in the northern province of the island, Miles de Cogan found an unexpected occasion for carrying his army into Connaught, where Roderic O'Connor was engaged in a disgraceful war with his own children. His son Murtough, during Roderic's absence in a distant part of the province, rose in rebellion against him, but finding little encouragement at home, he fled to Dublin. There he was introduced to Miles de Cogan, whose assistance he demanded, and who was unable to withstand the temptation held out to him by the young prince's offers. Perhaps William fitz Aldelm, wearied by the importunities of his soldiery, was not sorry to find an opportunity to employ them; and it is said to have been with his approval that De Cogan, with an army of forty knights and about five hundred soldiers, crossed the Shannon. The people of Connaught offered no resistance, but they burnt their towns and churches, with all their property which could not be carried away, as the English advanced, who thus discouraged at finding no plunder, and distressed for want of provisions, after they had advanced as far as Tuam without meeting an enemy during their eight days march, were obliged to return without fighting and without spoils.

Their retreat was hastened by the intelligence that a large army collected from Connaught and Munster, under the command of O'Connor, was prepared to harass them on the road. As they passed through a wood near the Shannon, they were assailed by the Irish from three different sides, but, after much hard fighting, they succeeded in reaching the English territory without much loss, and the expedition returned to Dublin with little profit and with no glory. The young prince, Murtough O'Connor, who had been the cause of this invasion, falling into the hands of his countrymen, was delivered up to his father, who immediately caused him to be deprived of his eyes, and committed to prison. This act of unnatural vengeance appears to have raised him up partizans where he had no favourers before, and he was released from confinement by some of these, and the flames of civil war in Connaught were lighted anew. The same rage of civil discord seemed to be spreading through every part of the island; Desmond and Thomond in the south, various tracts of Leinster in the interior, and the lands of the O'Niels in the north, all experienced its effects.

In the mean time Vivian had arrived at Dublin, where he immediately called a synod of the Irish prelates, and publicly declared to them king Henry's claim to the sovereignty of the island, pronouncing the papal malediction on all who should refuse obedience to it. At this synod it was decreed that the English soldiers in their expeditions should be allowed to provide themselves with provisions out of the churches, on paying a reasonable price to the rectors. It appears that the Irish had been accustomed, in cases of invasion, to remove their goods and provisions into their churches, thinking that the English soldiers would submit to all privations rather than break into an ecclesiastical edifice; and the church had thus been a great sufferer from the violence of the depredators. The legate's regulation was intended to remedy this evil. Another act connected with the ecclesiastical history of the island marked the vice-royalty of Fitz Aldelm, the removal from Armagh to Dublin of the celebrated "staff of Jesus." This pastoral staff, or crosier, which it is pretended had been sent from heaven to St. Patrick and was the instrument of many of his miracles, had been preserved with great devotion, and had been gradually covered with precious stones. It was looked upon by the superstitious Irish as carrying with it in some manner the eccle-

siastical sovereignty of the island, and its removal to Dublin is regarded as part of a plan to remove the seat of that sovereignty to the capital of the English possessions.

The time had now arrived, anticipated in the letter of the English monarch, announcing the appointment of Fitz Aldelm, when Henry would have leisure to turn his attention to Irish affairs. His ears were assailed with complaints against the government of his deputy; and, however, he might approve of the policy by which that government was actuated, he saw that it was vain to hope it could be efficient amid the disagreements and jealousies to which it had given rise, and perhaps he thought that storms were now gathering which would require the exertion of greater military talents. William fitz Aldelm was accordingly recalled, and Miles de Cogan and Robert fitz Stephen were ordered to accompany him to England. Hugh de Lacy was appointed his successor; and the energy which showed itself in every act of his administration, the activity he displayed in removing grievances, his even distribution of justice, and his conciliating behaviour towards the native chiefs, as well as to the English barons, soon rendered him deservedly popular with all.

King Henry had already proceeded to a variety of acts that showed he was now preparing for the development of his plans for reducing Ireland to a more orderly dependence on the English crown. Early in the year 1177, he had obtained the permission of the pope to divide the island into subordinate fiefs, and also, with the hope no doubt of thus supplying the want of the royal presence and sanction in the local government, to constitute his son John, or any one of his other sons, king of Ireland in subordination to his own throne. The pope is said to have gone even further than king Henry's request, and to have sent him a crown to place on his son's head, but of this no use was ever made; and he gave the king full authority to reduce to obedience by force of arms any of the Irish chiefs who should show themselves refractory to his will.

About the middle of May, Henry assembled a great council of prelates and barons at Oxford, and there in presence of them all appointed his son John king or lord of Ireland. The latter title is the one he subsequently made use of. In this act the king seems completely to have set aside the claims and rights of Roderic O'Connor, and, overlooking in a great measure his former treaty, which

distinguished between the territory of the English barons and that of the native chiefs who acknowledged the sovereignty of the king of Connaught, he assumes the whole island to be held in fief from the crown of England. He accordingly at this time made several new and important grants of territory, and sent back into Ireland several of the English leaders who had been recalled. He gave to Hugh de Lacy a new grant of Meath, which was in future to be held of the king and his son, by the service of a hundred knights. To Miles de Cogan and Robert fitz Stephen he gave the kingdom of Desmond, to be held likewise of himself and his son, with the exception of the city of Cork and the adjoining cantreds, which the king retained in his own hands, entrusting the custody to Cogan and Fitz Stephen. Henry made similar grants of the kingdom of Limerick, with the reservation of the city. The greater part of Connaught he gave to William fitz Aldelm. And he gave to Roger le Poer the territory of Waterford, reserving to himself the city and the cantred of the Ostmen.

As a considerable portion of the territory thus granted, was not, at the time, in the king's hands, new wars were the natural result, and Henry seems not to have acted with his usual prudence when he raised this new element of confusion. Fitz Stephen and Miles de Cogan took possession of the city of Cork, but some time passed before they obtained any large portion of the kingdom of Desmond. The kingdom of Limerick (North Munster) which was still possessed by Donald O'Brian, had been offered first to two brothers of the earl of Cornwall, with a third associate, who was their nephew, but they declined it, and it was conferred on Philip de Braose. This baron collected a band of adventurers, who are represented as the scum of Wales and the Marches, and accompanied Miles de Cogan and Robert fitz Stephen to their city of Cork. The two latter, after having made a temporary compromise with the chiefs of South Munster, marched with Braose to Limerick, but when they arrived on the banks of the Shannon, they found that the Irish, in their determined hostility to the invaders, had committed their city to the flames. Fitz Stephen urged De Braose to cross the river and attack the enemy, and offered to build him a castle there to enable him to keep the natives in awe. But Philip de Braose, though, on other occasions, he had shown

no want of courage, was daunted by the reception he met with in his new lands, and, further discouraged by the unsteady conduct of his own men, he determined to make a hasty retreat to Cork, giving the old adventurers another occasion to talk of the weakness and pusillanimity of the new comers.

The latter, however, if they did little in the way of conquering territory, seem to have obtained possession of the king's ears, and no one who really became powerful or popular in Ireland could long avoid being an object of his jealousy. The first man who now fell under Henry's suspicions was Hugh de Lacy. This deputy, whose government was distinguished by vigour and energy in every department, had pursued, as far as it was possible in his position, a conciliatory policy towards the native chiefs, and perhaps in pursuance of this policy he now married the daughter of Roderic O'Connor king of Connaught. The king of England, knowing what extensive territory De Lacy already possessed, and aware that, if O'Connor's sons perished in the unnatural rebellion which they continued against their father, the English baron might through his wife obtain the crown of Connaught, was further impressed with the idea that the ultimate aim of the deputy, in conciliating the natives, was to make himself king of Ireland and then declare himself independent of the English crown. Hugh de Lacy was suddenly recalled; and the government of Ireland was entrusted to two men totally unfitted for the post, John constable of Cheshire, and Richard bishop of Coventry. It is probable that this was never intended to be more than a temporary appointment, for only three months had elapsed, when the king, fully satisfied of De Lacy's fidelity and of the wisdom of his conduct, restored him to the government.

While, under his rule, an unusual tranquillity prevailed within the English pale, where he was strengthening the English power by the erection of numerous castles (for Hugh de Lacy was long remembered as the great castellator of Ireland), John de Courcy, who had probably been joined by many who were tired of the inaction of the English province, was busily engaged in his hostilities with the Irish of Ulster. Firmly established at Down, and master of the surrounding country, he now ventured upon frequent expeditions against the various Irish chiefs of the North in search of plunder, and he was thus gradually extending

the limits of his own territory. During the present year (1178), he sustained two rather serious defeats, from which, however, he appears quickly to have recovered. One of his ships, returning from England with provisions and stores, had sailed up the bay of Carlingford, but on arriving near the town of Newry, it was seized and destroyed by an Irish chief of Orgial, and the whole crew massacred. De Courcy immediately raised a small army, and marched into the district of Newry. Meeting with no resistance, and finding that the Irish chief had retired on their approach, the English plundered the country, and encamped at night with their booty in the vale through which the river of Newry flows. Next morning they were astonished to find themselves confronted with a powerful army of the Irish chieftains; for it appears that the destruction of the ship had been a mere stratagem to draw De Courcy into a snare, while the clans of Ulster were assembling in the neighbourhood of Dundalk, in the hope of overpowering him by their numbers. The English were at first discouraged by the alarming superiority of their foe, and De Courcy held council with one of his trusty followers, Armoric de St. Laurence, whether they should attack the Irish or retreat; and by his advice, it is said, a friar was sent to the Irish army as a deserter, to spread the report that he had received a large reinforcement from Down. This stratagem was so far successful, that when the English army, drawn up so as to present the widest possible front, marched up confidently and resolutely to the attack, the Irish turned their backs and fled, until, coming to a deep river many were drowned in the attempt to pass over. But the English had followed up the pursuit too rashly, and the flying enemy, driven to desperation by the obstacle which the river had thrown in the way of their escape, turned on their pursuers, and drove them back with considerable loss. Soon after, in an invasion of Dalaradia, the English were again defeated, and John de Courcy is said to have been severely wounded. We are told by Giraldus that eleven only of his knights were left to accompany their daring leader, and without horses, and without food, they were obliged to drag their heavy armour over thirty miles of difficult country, incessantly fighting with the hordes who surrounded them, until, after passing in this manner two days and two nights, they sheltered themselves in the castle of Down.

The Irish annals speak of some hostilities in the English pale besides those excited in Munster by king Henry's grants. They inform us that, in 1178, De Lacy marched with his forces to Clonmacnoise, and plundered all the town, "except the churches and the bishop's houses."* In the same year, the same chroniclers tell us that the English and the people of Offaly gained a victory over their neighbours in what is now called the King's County.

The pacific state of the English territory was the consequence in a great measure of the troubled condition of the rest of Ireland. From the north and west of Ulster, throughout Connaught, and into Munster, the whole land was torn with civil contention, and in the fierce struggle between chief and chief, Hugh de Lacy appears to have acted on the prudent policy of letting the natives fight their own battles without interfering. A slight notice of these troubles, as we trace them in the native chronicles, will give the best insight into the state of Ireland at this period. Early in 1178, a feud had arisen between the O'Gormlys, chiefs of the tribe of the Kinel-Moen in Tyrone, and the O'Loonys of the same, or of a kindred tribe; in consequence of which, during the summer, Donnell O'Gormly was driven into exile, and Connor O'Loony assumed the chieftainship of the tribe. The triumph of the O'Loonys, however, was not of long duration, for three months afterwards the Kinel-Moen deposed Connor, and restored Donnell. In pursuance of this feud, immediately after Donnell's restoration, some of his friends treacherously fell upon O'Loony and slew him in O'Donnell's own house, and popular indignation was increased by the fact that the murdered man was at that very moment under the protection of an 'erenagh' or priest. A new insurrection took place against O'Gormly, he was deposed again, and they set up an O'Flaherty as their chief. There appears to have been a secondary feud between this man and some other families of the same district; and three of his sons killed his rival O'Gormly, as well as nine other persons of substance. This feud, joined perhaps with others, was continued with great violence during the following

year; and we are told that, at the commencement of 1179, the churches of Tyrone, from the mountain southwards, were left desolate, "in consequence of war and intestine commotion, famine, and distress." The O'Gormlys appear to have regained the ascendancy, and to have been in consequence involved in hostilities with other families. But at length, as we are told, peace was concluded by the O'Gormly now in power (a brother of Donnell) and an O'Carellan, chief of the Clan Dermot, who had seized upon a part of Moy-Ith, in O'Gormly's country. This peace was concluded between them in the church of Ardstraw, upon the relics of that church and those of Donaghmore and Urney. Next day, O'Gormly, going to the house of O'Carellan to demand further guarantees of their agreement, was there slain with three of his friends, by O'Carellan's men, in the doorway of the house, in the presence of his own sister, who was O'Carellan's wife. The feud again broke out with violence, and Ardstraw, Donaghmore, Urney, and other places, were laid desolate by the men of Moy-Ith. These hostilities were continued through the following year, when several of the O'Carellans, including the one who was thus guilty of O'Gormly's death, were slain.

The Irish of Munster were not less turbulent than those of the northern parts of the island. There, during the year 1178, the old jealousy between the Dalcassians and the Eugenians broke out again, and led to a war between the O'Brians and the Mac Carthys, the chiefs of those great tribes, which desolated the whole country from Limerick to Cork, and from the plain of Derrymore to Brandon Hill. The dispersed and persecuted Eugenians sought refuge in the woods and fastnesses of Ive-Eachach, on the south side of the river Lee, where they formed new settlements, having driven other clans who occupied the district over the Mangerton mountains.

Connaught was meanwhile ravaged by the greater and still less honourable feud between O'Connor and his sons, who probably held communication with, and perhaps received encouragement and support from, the turbulent inhabitants of Ulster on the north and Munster on the south. Among the towns plundered and burnt in consequence of these commotions, during the year 1179, the Irish chronicles mention Clonfert-Brendan (with its churches), Tuam, and other places in Connaught, and Cashel, Ardfer-

* The annals of the Four Masters inform us that this year, "The river Galway was dried up for a period of a natural day; all the articles that had been lost in it from remotest times, as well as its fish, were collected by the inhabitants of the fortress, and by the people of the country in general."

Brendan, &c. in Munster. In 1180, in addition to a considerable list of chiefs killed or "treacherously slain," the chronicles mention a great battle, popularly known as the battle of the Connors, fought in Galway (where the civil war of Connaught appears to have raged with the greatest intensity), between a son of king Roderic O'Connor and the O'Kellys of Hy-Many, in which the chief of that tribe with several of the principal men of his family were slain. The year 1181 was peculiarly fatal to the O'Connors. A dispute had arisen relating to the chieftainship of the territory of Carbury, in the north of Munster (in the present county of Sligo), which brought in an invasion by the Kinel-Connell, or people of Tírconnell (Donegal), under their chief Flaherty O'Muldory, and in a great battle fought on the territory of Carbury, on the Saturday before Whitsuntide, the sons of the king of Connaught, who claimed the territory for themselves, were defeated with great loss, and no less than sixteen members of the chief families in Connaught are recorded among the slain. In this year and the following, the domestic feuds among the clans of Ulster appear to have broken out with increased violence, and De Courcy and his English no doubt took advantage of them to strengthen themselves and extend their conquests. The Irish annals state that, in 1182, the Kinel-Owen, and probably some of the neighbouring tribes, marched against the English, and were defeated in a sanguinary battle; and it is recorded as a great misfortune, that on this occasion the victors carried off with them the Gospel of St. Martin, a copy of the Gospels celebrated in old Irish legend, said to have belonged to St. Martin of Tours, and to have been brought into Ireland by St. Patrick.

In the midst of these wild commotions amongst his countrymen, on the 14th of November, 1180, died Laurence O'Toole, archbishop of Dublin, whose virtues and patriotism had gained the love and respect of his countrymen, and whose piety and reputed miracles merited for him the honour of canonization in the Romish ritual. He had distinguished himself by his activity during the whole period of the Anglo-Norman invasion of his country, and he had often interfered to soften down the horrors of war. He was one of the six Irish prelates who in 1179 attended the general council of the Lateran, and he was received with marks of distinction by pope Alexander III. In

the year following he had accompanied a son of Roderic O'Connor to England, when he was sent by his father as an hostage for his observance of the treaty with king Henry; and subsequently, passing into France, he was attacked by a fever on the borders of Normandy, and died at Eu, where he was buried. Most of the Irish annalists, by a very singular error, say that he died a martyr. The king of England immediately sent one of his chaplains to Ireland to take possession of the see, and he called a meeting of the clergy of Dublin at Evesham, where, at his recommendation, an English ecclesiastic named John Cuming was elected to the archiepiscopal chair. This was another step towards giving force and permanence to the English interest in Ireland.

The year 1182 was fatal to several of the earlier English adventurers in Ireland. Robert fitz Stephen and Miles de Cogan had ruled quietly during five years in the city of Cork over what they possessed of the old kingdom of Desmond, and they had cultivated friendship with the Irish chiefs. But the latter seem now to have been meditating a revolt against the English, and they commenced with an act of cruel treachery. Miles de Cogan and a son of Fitz Stephen, a youth of great promise who had married De Cogan's daughter, had proceeded with five knights to the neighbourhood of Lismore, where they were to hold a conference with some of the people of Waterford. They were to have been guests that night of an Irish chief named Mac Tyre; and it was probably near his house that they were sitting down, waiting the arrival of the Waterfordians, when Mac Tyre and some of his household came behind them and slew the whole party with their axes. We are led to conjecture that the assassin intended to effect his purpose during the night, but that, fearing from some cause or other to lose the opportunity, he had thus come upon them unawares. That the act was premeditated appears evident from the general rising of the Irish of Munster which followed. Mac Carthy, of Desmond, placed himself at the head of a numerous army, and marched directly against Cork; where Fitz Stephen, overcome with grief for the loss of two sons—for one had died a short time before—and of his colleague in arms and in power, was ill prepared for a defence. Raymund, who was at Wexford, soon received intelligence of the danger of his kinsman, and of the English power in Desmond, and he put to sea with

twenty knights and about a hundred other soldiers, and hastened along the coast to his assistance. The presence of the veteran Raymund raised the courage of the defenders of Cork, and after being defeated in several engagements, the Irish king of Desmond was driven from their territory with disgrace. When king Henry received intelligence of these events, he sent Richard de Cogan, the brother of Miles, to take his place as Fitz Stephen's colleague, who carried with him a chosen body of troops to reinforce the garrison of Cork. Towards the latter end of the following winter, about the end of February, Fitz Stephen's nephew, Philip de Barri, sailed from Wales with a considerable force to take possession of some lands given to him by his uncle in Olethan, a tract lying between Cork and Youghal. Philip was accompanied by his learned brother Giraldus, the historian, whose narrative has been our principal aid in recording the events of the English invasion.

At the period of which we are now speaking, several of the great actors in the foregoing events were suddenly seized with fits of repentance for the violent deeds of their lives of turbulence, which they attempted to pacify by offerings to the church and by the foundation of monastic houses. Among these Hervy de Montmaurice not only founded the magnificent abbey of Dunbrody, in 1182, but early in the following year he himself exchanged the helmet for the cowl, and became a monk at Christ Church, Canterbury, to which religious house he had given some of his ecclesiastical patronage in Ireland. Hugh de Lacy, about the same time, founded a monastery at Duleek, and another at Colp, at the mouth of the Boyne. John de Courcy, the reckless invader of Ulster, also distinguished himself by his religious foundations, and in addition to one or two new houses which he built, he joined in the prejudices of the day against the secular clergy, and, expelling the canons from the cathedral of Down, introduced in their place Benedictine monks from St. Werburgh's at Chester, changing at the same time the dedication title of the church from the Holy Trinity to St. Patrick.

Another personage who had acted no small part in these events followed the example of Hervy de Montmaurice a little later, wearied with the unnatural conduct of his sons and grandsons, which continued to embroil the kingdom of Connaught, not only as long as Roderic himself persisted in re-

taining the crown, but for years after he resigned it. The rebels of Connaught, when hard pressed, sometimes crossed the English border to seek assistance among their father's foes.* A new change in the English government added little to the general tranquillity. Hugh de Lacy had again incurred the king's suspicions, and was recalled, after he had covered Leinster with as many castles as he had previously erected in his own earldom of Meath. His successor was Philip de Braose, or (as he was better known among the Irish) Philip of Worcester, a younger man and of far less experience, and who had only been distinguished in the wars of Ireland by his discreditable retreat from Limerick. He is represented as seeking only to enrich himself by plunder and oppression, and he contrived to give offence to most of the old barons of the English Pale. Marching to Armagh about Mid-Lent, 1185, he gave up many of the best houses of the city to be plundered by his soldiers, not sparing even the possessions of the clergy; and the latter were especially scandalized by his profane conduct in spending this holy season in feasting and riot. When he refused to listen to their complaints against his soldiers by whom they had been plundered, they denounced against him the judgment of their patron saint, and a fit of sickness by which he was seized on his departure convinced them that their denunciation had not been pronounced in vain. One of the soldiers of his companion Hugh Tyrrel had stolen a brass pan from a religious house in the city; and the monks were still further consoled when they learnt that the house in which he lodged had taken fire and been burnt with all his plunder. It is added that Hugh Tyrrel himself, struck with remorse, ordered the pan to be restored.

The years which followed this occurrence are marked in the Irish annals by more than their usual number of skirmishes, slaughters, and treacherous deaths. The English possessions were gradually disturbed by these events, and the Irish chiefs, released from the energetic government of De Lacy, began to show their jealousy of his castles.

* The alleged cause of the war raised by the sons of O'Connor against their father, was the old practice that when any one was elected to the crown of Ireland, he gave up his own subordinate kingdom to his eldest son. O'Connor, having in the higher title at the time he came to it little more than an empty name, retained his more substantial kingdom of Connaught, which his sons demanded that he should give up to them.

O'Melachlin, who is termed in the Irish annals the lord of West Meath, is there stated to have been treacherously slain by Dermot O'Brian, "at the instigation of the English," and it is added that another Melachlin succeeded him, and three days afterwards avenged him in a battle in which one of the O'Brians was slain. The same authorities tell us, as something remarkable under the government of Philip de Braose, that a castle was erected this year by the English at Kildare, in Meath; and they add that another castle of the English was taken and plundered by the Irish, and many of its defenders slain.

In the midst of this confusion, and alarmed at the state of the English possessions in Ireland, king Henry now resolved to put into effect the design he had some time entertained of sending his son, prince John, to assume the government of that island in person. He announced his intention to send with him as his adviser the wise and able justiciary, Ranulph de Glanville; and he appointed as the prince's secretary and tutor the historian Giraldus, who had been some time residing in Ireland, and who was supposed to have made himself well acquainted with the country and its inhabitants.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM THE ARRIVAL OF PRINCE JOHN TO THE END OF
THE TWELFTH CENTURY.



MERE boy, for John was, at this time, only twelve years of age, and the gay and thoughtless courtiers who formed his train,

were certainly not the men best calculated to govern Ireland in the difficulties under which it now laboured. The English king was probably aware of this, for he hesitated long before he decided on entrusting so great a charge to hands so inexperienced; but he was blinded by his affection for this his favourite, though not his most worthy, son, and he probably thought, from the effect which his own presence had produced on a former occasion, that a member of his own family would be received with more respect by the Irish chieftains than his mere official deputies. It was a method of soothing their pride which was afterwards put in practice by the English monarchs with regard to Wales.

In Lent, 1185, the prince, after having been knighted by his father at Windsor, proceeded along the southern coast of Wales to Pembroke, under the conduct of his father's able minister, Ranulph de Glanville. On the evening of the last day of March, he went on board what one of his attendants, the historian Giraldus, describes as a most fair fleet, carrying with him no less than four hundred knights, with a considerable

army of horse and foot, and everything necessary to give an imposing effect to his mission. With the advantage of a favourable wind, the fleet reached Waterford the next day, about noon, where the report of his coming had already filled everybody's mind with the highest expectations, which were destined, in the sequel, to be miserably disappointed. It appears that Ranulph de Glanville had accompanied the prince no farther than Pembroke, and that he was now left to the counsels of his young courtiers, little inclined to pay attention to the sager advice of the few older men who attended upon him, and who had no power to enforce it.

As the English king must have expected, the Irish chieftains came forward as readily to pay their court to his son, as they had done to himself, when he landed at the same place fourteen years before. They seem to have been wearied with the desolating warfare which had so long ravaged the land, and to have entertained the hope that they would find, in the immediate presence of a sovereign power, which was no longer influenced by the base feelings of enriching itself at the expense of others, a protection against the injuries and oppressions of those warlike barons who had inspired in them a feeling of personal hatred which would scarcely allow them to enter into conciliatory relations with the English.

The Irish chiefs, who lived under English rule in the English settlements, were the

first to present themselves at the new court, were they were made objects of public laughter by the vain attendants of their prince, who treated the rudeness of their manners and dress with derision, and even carried their insulting mockery so far as to pluck some of them by their beards, an ornament of the person to which the native Irish appear to have been especially attached. And when the chiefs approached, according to their custom, to give the kiss of peace to their new ruler, a salutation consecrated by their old habits and prejudices, the young Normans of the prince's retinue pushed them scornfully away. Their native pride was roused by this treatment, and they left Waterford, not to repair to their homes within the English Pale, but to fly to Munster and Connaught, and throw themselves into the arms of the Irish kings who had hitherto preserved their independence, and distinguished themselves most by their hatred of their English neighbours. Many of these were actually on their way to make their submissions, and pay their court to prince John, and it is even said that the old enemies of the English, the kings of Desmond, Thomond, and Connaught, had determined at last to acknowledge the supremacy of the English government at Dublin; but now, joined in one feeling of indignation, they communicated mutually on their griefs, and united in a general league of hostility against the insulting foreigners. Those chiefs who continued in their fidelity in the English territory, were treated no better than those who fled; for, on the slightest pretext, they were deprived of their lands, which were given to some needy attendant on the court, and they were thus driven to seek redress by joining their countrymen who were in insurrection. The evil was aggravated by the folly of the new rulers, who, instead of taking their measures with provident foresight to resist and avert the dangers which threatened the English on every side, occupied themselves chiefly in quarrels and litigations with the older settlers, whose disgust and indignation were not much less than that of the Irish themselves.

While it was well known that the Irish were arming, prince John and his advisers were keeping their court in reckless and luxurious extravagance. They talked loud, but did little. Their only measure of defence was to erect three castles at Tibracny, Ardfinnan, and Lismore, and the Irish said, that the only object of these fortresses, was

to serve as so many starting points for the plunder of Munster. It was on these castles that the storm first burst. Lismore was taken by surprise, and its governor, Robert de Barri, one of the first of the English who had landed in Ireland, was taken and slain, with his whole troop. O'Brian king of Thomond marched against Ardfinnan, which stood in a commanding position, on a rock overlooking the Suir; and, unable to take it by force, he allured the small garrison to pursue him in a feigned flight, and surrounding them, put the whole to the sword. Other disasters, of a similar description, were announced on every side. The brave Roger le Poer was surprised and slain in Ossory; and two other distinguished leaders, Raymund Canton and Raymund fitz Hugh, were similarly cut off at Hy-Drone and Olechan.

In other quarters, however, the Irish were less successful. Mac Carthy prince of Desmond made another attempt to capture the city of Cork, which was defended by Theobald Walter, one of those chiefs who had come into the island with Fitz Aldelm. Theobald Walter made a brave resistance; and at length attacking the Irish by surprise, Mac Carthy himself was among the number of the slain. Within the English Pale, the clans of Connaught, on the western border, having made a desperate inroad, in despite of Hugh de Lacy's castles, and his known prudence in war as well as in peace, they were met by his dependant, William Petit, who defeated them with great slaughter, and sent a hundred of their heads as a trophy to Dublin. It was, indeed, the old settlers only who presented any obstacle to the projects of the Irish, and they were too often sacrificed to the imprudence of their rulers. The latter, with a fresh army, which, with wise counsel and able commanders, would have been sufficient to ensure the submission of the whole island, only exposed it rashly and uselessly, until it was almost all lost in the different conflicts with the natives.

The interests of the English were again served by those domestic feuds which had so constantly hindered the Irish from uniting, with any stability, in the common cause. The dissensions between the king of Connaught broke out with increased fury, and led to a sanguinary battle, which, however, appears to have had no decisive results. Both the children of Roderic O'Connor and Donald O'Brian of Thomond, who seem to

have been drawn into the quarrel, called in the help of their English neighbours, who appear thus to have served on both sides. We learn, from the Irish annals, that the west of Connaught was burnt, as well churches as houses, by Donald O'Brian and the English. And the same authorities inform us, that Roderic's son, Connor Monmoy, with the assistance of the English, "destroyed and pillaged" Thomond, and that the English returned with him as far as Roscommon, where he gave them three thousand cows as their wages. Early in the following year, 1186, the family of king Roderic are said to have succeeded in banishing him, and, at length, disgusted with the world, he resigned the crown, and retired to the monastery of Cong.

At first the state of things in Ireland appears to have been carefully concealed from king Henry, and English and Irish accounts seem to agree that the only communications he received from prince John and his courtiers were perpetual complaints of the ambitious designs of the veteran Hugh de Lacy, who had probably given them offence by disapproving of their measures. The disorder was allowed to gain head during eight months, before the king, at length fully informed of the dangerous condition of his Irish possessions, recalled his son to England. He had so far listened to the complaints against Hugh de Lacy as to require that nobleman to attend him in England for the purpose of explaining his conduct. But De Lacy, who was indefatigable in his preparations to resist and revenge the inroads of the natives throughout the territory which constituted his fief, had at this moment fallen another victim to the hatred of the Irish. He was erecting a new castle at Durrow (in the modern King's County), as a defence for an unprotected part of his western border, on a spot which had formerly been occupied by a monastery dedicated to St. Columbkille; and the superstitious feelings of the natives were no less outraged by what they conceived to be a profanation of consecrated ground, than by their dislike to see arise this new knot in the strong bond which Hugh de Lacy's castles had placed upon their independence. De Lacy was unarmed, conversing with his workmen, and giving directions for the work. On a sudden he stooped down to point out some alterations in the entrenchment which surrounded the edifice, when one of the workmen, who stood behind him, drew out an Irish axe

which he had concealed beneath his garment, and struck him on the neck with so much force, that the head was separated from the body, and both rolled together to the bottom of the fosse. The escape of the murderer was favoured by the workmen, and he reached the woods in safety, no one being found willing to give any information which might lead to his discovery. The Irish annalists tell us the name of the murderer, as well as that of the Irish chief at whose instigation he committed the crime; but they disagree among themselves, and the question is not one of sufficient importance to induce us to devote any space to its discussion.*

It appears that when king Henry heard of the death of Hugh de Lacy, he determined to send his son John back into Ireland to resume the government in person, and seize into his own hands the castles and lands of the deceased, during the minority of his children. But the death of another son, Geoffrey duke of Britany, caused the king to change his intention, and he appointed as his deputy in Ireland the only man whose daring energies were perhaps at that moment equal to the task of contending with the emergencies of the moment, John de Courcy, the conqueror of Ulster. Left with the old adventurers and to his own resources, he proceeded deliberately to the business of war, in which they were all inured, and the murder of De Lacy furnished him a sufficient excuse for visiting with exemplary vengeance the tribes who were supposed to have instigated it or been accomplices in it.

From this moment the sword was hardly ever laid aside, and the warlike tone assumed by John de Courcy's government was encouraged by the renewal of the domestic feuds of the Irish, who had not long held together in

* An event occurred before prince John left Ireland, which, though of little importance in its civil history, is made much of by those who treat of the history of the church. John De Courcy was occupied in consolidating and fortifying his power in Ulster, and he seems to have understood well the policy of conciliating the good-will of the clergy. In the troubles of so many ages, amid the devastations of the Danes, the exact spot in the church of Down where the bodies of the three saints Patriek, Columba, and Brigid reposed, had been entirely forgotten. In 1186, Malachy, bishop of Down declared that the spot had been pointed out to him by divine revelation, and, under John De Courcy's special patronage, they were removed in great solemnity to a more honourable part of the church, where they were again deposited in one tomb. Information of the discovery had been sent to the pope, and Cardinal Vivian was again sent to Ireland to assist at the ceremony.

their league against the English. Instead of attacking the English settlements in Ulster, now that John de Courcy was absent, the clans of Tirconnell and Tyrone in the north were engaged in sanguinary war with each other, in which more than one chief fell to leave a new motive of vengeance on the part of his family and tribe. The deposition, or resignation, of Roderic O'Connor, had added a new cause of strife among the Irish, besides the unsettled state of his own kingdom; for a number of obscure competitors offered themselves for the empty name of king of Ireland. Among these was O'Lochlin, the lord of Aileach, or Alichia, who represented an ancient and brave race of Irish kings; he was deposed from his chieftainship in the struggle, and Roderic O'Cananain was accepted in his place as the pretender to the sovereign crown. At the same time a violent feud between the O'Ruacs, or O'Rourke, of Breffny, and some of the clans of Connaught, appointed by the new king of that province, O'Connor Maonmoy, afforded a greater temptation for the interference of the English of Meath. The people of Connaught, under king O'Connor and another chief, surprised the castle of Killare in west Meath, burnt and razed it to the ground, and slew all the English who garrisoned it, carrying away the armour and arms they found in it. Soon after, one of the O'Rourke was treacherously slain by one of the clans of Leitrim. In revenge, the Irish of Breffny, under Maelechlain O'Rourke and a son of Cathal O'Rourke, in conjunction with the English of Meath, penetrated into the barony of Carbury, and plundered Drumcliff, a monastery dedicated to St. Columbkille. The insult offered to the saint excited greater sympathy among the neighbouring tribes than the mere act of invasion, and within a fortnight Flaherty O'Muldory, prince of Tirconnell, invaded Conmaicne, the territory of Maelechlain, slew that chief, and deprived the son of Cathal O'Rourke of his eyes. The Irish annalists exult in the reflection that the honour of St. Columbkille was avenged on this occasion by the slaughter of no less than a hundred and twenty relatives of Maelechlain O'Rourke. His son and successor, Hugh, lord of Breffny, was also slain before the end of the year.

Thus passed the year 1187, and the new year opened with no abatement of these desolating feuds among the native Irish.

Early in the spring, Roderic O'Cananain, who has been already mentioned as the claimant to the crown of Ireland on the deposition of Donald O'Lochlin, and who seems to have been a rival of Flaherty O'Muldory for the chieftainship of Tirconnell, was decoyed by the latter from his asylum at Drumcliff, and treacherously slain on the bridge of Sligo, with one of his kinsmen and several of his people who accompanied him. His death was soon afterwards revenged by the slaughter of the man by whose hand he fell; and Donald O'Lochlin was again brought forward as the pretender to the monarchy. But his enjoyment of the empty title was also of short duration; for the English garrison of a castle which John de Courcy had built at Moycoba in Down, a spot celebrated as the site of the battle in which Magnus, king of the Danes, had been slain at the beginning of the century, in conjunction with a party from Iveagh in Ulidia, made a predatory excursion into Tyrone, and collected a considerable booty in cattle, on which Donald O'Lochlin raised the country and pursued them. The two parties met at a place called by the old writers Cavan-na-g-Crannard, said to be about two miles from Armagh on the road to Newry, and there fought a sanguinary battle, in which the English were defeated; but, in the moment of victory, O'Lochlin fell, slain by the thrust of an Englishman's spear. Another O'Lochlin is said to have been killed the same year in an engagement with a predatory troop of the English of Ulidia, or the district of Down. The English, in this instance also, are said to have been defeated. The native Irish, in fact, had profited in military skill and in the use of arms in their constant wars with the invaders.

The troubles which marked the year 1188 were not confined to the north. A faction had arisen in Connaught under a native chieftain named Cornelius O'Dermot, the object of which was to depose O'Connor Maonmoy from the sovereignty; and they invited John de Courcy to march to their assistance. The English viceroy, who was glad of an opportunity of punishing the people of that province for the readiness with which they joined in the recent league against the English, required little persuasion, but joining himself with O'Dermot invaded Connaught with a formidable army, destroying everything in his march, till he came to Ballysadare in the modern county

of Sligo. There he learnt that Donald O'Brian of Thomond having joined the king of Connaught with the forces of Munster, the two princes were approaching rapidly to overwhelm him with an army far superior in numbers to his own. John de Courcy immediately determined to alter the intended line of his march, and to force his way through Tirconnell to the English possessions in Ulster. But he had no sooner come to this resolution than he learnt that Flaherty O'Muldory, who seems to have been in intelligence with the two other Irish kings, had also raised a large army, and that he had already approached to Drumcliff to hem him in on that side. John de Courcy immediately burnt Ballysadare and attempted to effect his retreat over the Curlew mountains, but he was overtaken by the united forces of Connaught and Munster, and lost many of his men before he regained the English pale. The Irish writers lament the devastation committed by the English in this inroad. After the departure of the English the rebellion in Connaught was soon suppressed, and that province appeared to be restored to some degree of tranquillity; and to add to the glory of the O'Connor who sat on the throne, Donald O'Brian for Thomond, as well as Mac Carthy for Desmond, with Roderic mac Dunslevy, who still bore the nominal title of king of Ulidia, O'Rourke of Breffny, and Maelsechlain Beag, who is described as king of Tara (probably a pretender to the crown of Meath), united their suffrages in acknowledging him as king of Ireland, and received from him the presents it had been customary to give to the subordinate kings when they came to do homage to the monarch. Yet the faction which had been put down by force of arms, continued to plot in secret, and early in 1189 O'Connor Maonmoy was treacherously murdered by his own people. The unnatural hatred which divided this unfortunate family, seemed to pursue it to the last: the murderer of O'Connor Maonmoy was hired by the king's own brother, and before the year was out, in which the late king's son slew his uncle to revenge his father. New disorders followed the perpetration of this crime, and one party attempted to restore the deposed Roderic to the throne of Connaught. The clans of the north again interfered in the troubles of this province; and Flaherty O'Muldory invaded Sligo at the head of the army of Tirconnell, and encamped for some time at Coran in face of an hostile force, but he returned eventually to

his own country without having performed any exploit worthy of notice.

The hasty retreat of the English from Connaught in the preceding year had emboldened the Irish of Ulster, who made several inroads into the English possessions in Ulidia; in one of which O'Carrol prince of Orgial met with a severe defeat, and his associate, the prince of Fermanagh, was slain in the pursuit. The anger of John de Courcy was stirred up by these aggravating attacks, and he suddenly marched with an English army into Ulster, and stormed and plundered Armagh, where his enemies had assembled, and burnt a large portion of the town. Having reduced that province to tranquillity, and struck terror into the Irish by his severities, John de Courcy returned to his seat of government in Dublin to hear of a great change which had taken place in England.

On the 6th of July, 1189, Henry II. died at the castle of Chinon in Normandy, and a new monarch was placed on the throne of England in the person of his chivalrous son, Richard I. The attention of king Richard was entirely absorbed by his preparations for the Crusade, and he paid little regard to the affairs of Ireland, which were left entirely in the hands of prince John. The government of the English possessions in that island was transferred from the hands of John de Courcy to those of the younger Hugh de Lacy, and the former made no attempt to conceal his discontent, but retired into his own possessions in Ulster, and assumed a tone of independence which could not fail to alarm the English government.

The O'Connor who now occupied the throne of Connaught, was named Cathal Croivdearg, or Cathal of the Bloody Hand, from his warlike character, and the number of battles he had fought during the family feuds which had placed him on the throne. His bravery made him popular among his own countrymen, and the Irish chiefs of the neighbouring states sought his friendship. A competitor of the same family had been defeated in a sanguinary battle, in which English auxiliaries fought in the ranks of both factions, and this victory left him nearly undisputed possession of the throne. It appears that it was a considerable clan of Galway, the Siol Murray, who had attempted to restore his grandfather Roderic to the throne; the Irish annals inform us, that in 1191, an attempt was made to enlist in his favour, first, the chiefs of Tirconnell and Tyrone, and then the English of Meath, but

without effect, and we hear no more of him till the year 1198, when his death in the abbey of Cong, where he had embraced a religious life, is recorded. Another personage who had acted a part in the eventful drama, queen Dervorgilla, the wife of Tiernan O'Ruarc, and the paramour of Dermot, died in the monastery of Drogheda in 1193.

The pacification of Connaught left the warlike Cathal at liberty to meditate new leagues against the English, and the Irish princes were all willing to enlist under the banner of a young and adventurous chieftain whose renown was already spread throughout Ireland. Even the two chiefs of the Dalcassian and Eugenian tribes of Munster, O'Brian of Thomond and Mac Carthy of Desmond, agreed to lay aside their hereditary feuds, and unite in the common cause. The storm first threatened the English of Ulster, against whom Cathal seems to have formed an alliance with the chiefs of Tirconnell and Tyrone. John de Courcy collected his forces together to prepare for the shock, and sent urgent orders to his trusty counsellor and follower, Armoric de St. Laurence, to return in haste from a distant excursion in which he happened to be engaged at the head of about thirty horse and two hundred foot. The king of Connaught made a hasty march to intercept this straggling body, and Armoric soon found that his small forces had fallen unawares into an ambush, where they were surrounded by an immense horde of enemies who were bent on their destruction. In their first moment of despair it is said that the English cavalry determined to seek their own safety in flight, but their companions on foot surrounded them, and persuaded them to remain and share their fate; and Armoric having set the example, they drew their swords and slew their horses, and then marched resolutely with their companions against the enemy on foot. A thousand of the Irish are said to have fallen before they made any impression upon this brave troop, who, at length, wearied with their exertions, and overpowered by numbers, were slain to the last man. King Cathal, satisfied with this exploit, which was announced as a great and glorious victory, built an abbey on the spot to which he gave in Latin the vaunting name of "*De colle victoriæ*," the Abbey of the Hill of Victory; and he relieved John de Courcy of his apprehensions by returning quietly into his own dominions.

The threatening confederacy amongst the Irish chieftains created alarm in England,

where prince John was engaged in ambitious projects during the absence of his brother. The conduct of young Hugh de Lacy appears not to have given satisfaction, and he was probably considered unequal to the emergency. He was replaced by William Petit, who was doubtless considered but as a temporary substitute, for, shortly afterwards, the government of Ireland was entrusted to the earl marshal of England, William earl of Pembroke, who was supposed to be closely allied with the English interests by his marriage with Isabel, the daughter of earl Strongbow by Eva daughter of the king of Leinster, and by the great Irish estates he thus inherited.

No sooner was the alliance completed between the Mac Carthys and the O'Brians in the south, than Donald O'Brian marched against the English, who had entered Tipperary, and were already building castles to fortify the territory of which they had taken possession. The Irish gained a decisive victory at Thurles, and the English are said to have suffered considerable loss; yet not sufficient to hinder them from continuing their depredations, and they turned off into the territory of Desmond, where the Irish defended themselves with much less vigour. The king of Desmond, who had probably laid aside his feud with the O'Brians with reluctance, irritated by an attack which he was unable effectually to resist, accused the latter of treachery, and pretended that they had indulged their old feelings of rivalry by encouraging the English to invade his dominions. In the midst of their quarrel, early in the year 1194, the brave Donald O'Brian, whom the Irish annalist describes as "a refulgent torch of peace and war, and a brilliant star of hospitality and generosity," died, an event which cast a temporary damp on the spirits of his countrymen. His name was long cherished with grateful remembrance by the Irish ecclesiastics, who owed to his munificence, among other establishments, the cathedrals of Limerick and Cashel, and two celebrated nunneries. On O'Brian's death, the English threw themselves with greater ferocity on the kingdom of Thomond, treating O'Brian's people with excessive cruelty, probably in revenge for recent defeats. They are said to have been introduced by one of his sons, for O'Brian left a disputed succession, and his kingdom was desolated by civil war between his own children. In the course of these hostilities one of these sons was blinded, and another was dragged from

a sanctuary and slain, and the English became again masters of Limerick. The youngest son, Carbrach, who probably, from his hatred to the English, was accepted by the majority of the Dalcassians for their chief, called in the assistance of Cathal king of Connaught. He seized with eagerness the opportunity of distinguishing himself, marched a formidable army into Munster, drove the English invaders before him, and cheered the hearts of the Irish above all by the destruction of their castles, for the natives looked upon the English castles with especial jealousy. But Cathal O'Connor, with his usual instability, as soon as he had committed all the havoc he could on the English establishments, left Carbrach on the throne of Thomond, and returned to his own dominions.

Mac Carthy of Desmond had resumed courage when he heard of the first successes of the army of Connaught, and marching against the English, he defeated them in a sanguinary encounter, and not only drove them out of Limerick, but foiled them twice in their attempts to recover it. Cork was the only strong position now left to the English in Munster, and a new confederacy was formed for the purpose of expelling them entirely from the province. The army of Connaught again entered Munster to join with those of Thomond and Desmond, and Cathal was joined by O'Lochlin, the head of the ancient northern branch of the O'Nials, who brought under his banner as many of the soldiers of Ulster as could be spared from their own domestic feuds. The united armies defeated the English everywhere in the field, and soon formed the siege of Cork, which was gradually reduced to the last extremities, when the family feuds of the Irish chiefs again saved their enemies from destruction. Jealousies of very old standing still divided the O'Nials of the north from the reigning house of Connaught, and O'Lochlin beheld with secret envy the successes of Cathal O'Connor. He saw that the capture of Cork would only add to the influence of the crown of Connaught; and to prevent this he privately conspired with Mac Carthy, who also was jealous of Cathal, and to the astonishment of every body they suddenly broke up the siege. Cathal and O'Lochlin led their armies back to their respective countries. But the garrison of Cork was too much reduced to hold out long against an attack, and, after it had been relieved from the danger which threatened

it from the arms of the united kings, it surrendered to Mac Carthy of Desmond on much more favourable terms than could have been expected from them. The family divisions among the O'Brians again brought the English into Thomond, and predatory excursions were made into other parts of Munster, but they brought no permanent advantage to the English interests.

Such was the position of affairs, Munster lost to the English, Leinster threatened with troubles, and Hugh de Lacy and John de Courcy sufficiently occupied in preparing for the defence of their own provinces of Meath and Ulster, when, in 1197, the earl of Pembroke was called upon to surrender his authority into the hands of a new deputy, Hamo de Valentiis. This governor soon made himself obnoxious to all parties by his exactions, not sparing even the property of the church, which led him into a serious quarrel with the archbishop of Dublin, and thus added to the disorders which were daily gaining ground in the English province.

The history of the north of Ireland is at this time involved in considerable confusion, from the numerous family feuds, and from the practice now gaining ground among the English of serving under the Irish chiefs in their quarrels. John de Courcy in Ulster and Hugh de Lacy in Meath, setting at defiance the weak government at Dublin, acted as independent princes in their states, and formed alliances sometimes with one chief and sometimes with another. In the south, William de Burgh, a kinsman of Fitz Aldelm, and the ancestor of the modern families of the Burghs and Burkes, gradually established himself in the same independence in Munster, and at length obtained possession of Limerick, and from thence interfered in the affairs of Connaught. In that province the crown was still disputed between two claimants, Cathal Croivdearg (of the Bloody Hand), who was in possession, and another of the O'Connors named Cathal Carrach. The English of Munster took part with the latter, while John de Courcy and Hugh de Lacy appear uniformly to have supported the claims of the former.

We trace the hostilities between these different parties with tolerable distinctness in the Irish annals. In 1195, it is recorded that Cathal Croivdearg, with a party of the English and Irish of Meath, invaded Munster, and marched as far as Emly and Cashel, burning four great castles and several smaller fortresses. In retaliation, the rival Cathal

marched from Munster into Connaught, and destroyed all before him till he reached the heart of the county of Mayo, where he seized upon the shipping of the king of Connaught in lake Maske, and made that spot his head quarters, from whence he plundered the country around. Cathal Croivdearg, with his English auxiliaries, hastened thither to put a stop to his depredations, but instead of fighting they entered into treaty and made terms with him to depart. The year following (1196) a revolution took place in Ulster, where Murtough O'Lochlin prince of Tyrone, who had been acknowledged as the presumptive heir to the crown of Ireland, and who is described by his countrymen as the "destroyer of the cities and castles of the English, and founder of churches and fair sanctuaries," was basely murdered by the procurator of his subjects. On this, Roderic mac Dunslevy, the old prince of Down, "with the English" (probably of Meath), and some of the Irish clans of Connaught, invaded Tyrone and proceeded as far as the neighbourhood of Armagh. There they were encountered by the people of Tyrone and Armagh, and defeated in a sanguinary battle; and among the chiefs who fell on the side of the invaders were an O'Flaherty, two O'Connors, and a son of O'Felan of the Desies. This war subsequently dwindled into a succession of mutual assassinations. On another side, a new feud arose from the death of Mahon, a brother of the reigning prince of Connaught, who had invaded the English territory, but as he was returning with his prey, he was defeated and slain by Donald O'Moore of Leix. The pretender of Connaught, Cathal Carrach, revenged the death of his kinsman by attacking and slaying O'Moore.

Early in 1197 John de Courcy joined the O'Lochlins, who claimed supremacy in Tyrone, and marched his army to Coleraine, near which place they built a castle called Kill-Sanctan, and thence they proceeded to plunder the district of Keenaght, in Derry, leaving a strong garrison in their castle. This garrison having issued rather incautiously from their stronghold to plunder the country lying on the coast, were suddenly attacked by Flaherty O'Muldory, and defeated with considerable loss.* An O'Loch-

lin was slain on the side of the English. On the second of February Flaherty O'Muldory, who is called by the Irish annalists lord of Tirconnell, Tyrone, and Orgial, died at his residence in Inis-Samer, a place well known in Irish romance. Thereupon Eachmarcach O'Doherty assumed the government of Tirconnell. John de Courcy had stood his ground on the northern coast, and in the middle of February he crossed at Toom Bridge into Tyrone, and proceeded thence by Ardstraw, plundering everything on his way, to Derry, where he remained five nights, and then crossed over the water into the isle of Inisowen. Here the English were attacked by the new chief of Tirconnell, but the people of Tirconnell were defeated with great loss, and Eachmarcach O'Doherty, with many other chiefs, were among the slain. The English then plundered Inisowen, and carried home a great booty to their own settlements.

Tyrone and Tirconnell, as well as Connaught, were now again desolated by the struggle of rival claimants to their respective chieftainships. John de Courcy was so well satisfied with the result of his plundering expedition in 1197, that he seized the occasion of these quarrels, and early in the year following again marched to Derry, plundering Ardstraw and Raphoe on his way. He remained at Derry nine days, during which his plundering parties again ravaged Inisowen, as well as the country around Derry. One of these parties had collected their plunder in the town of Larne on the coast, when Hugh O'Neill arrived with five armed ships, and falling upon them suddenly, burnt the town, and killed some of the English. Another party of the English, consisting of about three hundred men from Moylinny and Dalaradia, arrived to the assistance of their companions, but they were beaten by the Irish, and the old chronicler tells us that in their retreat they sustained five other defeats before they reached their own shipping. John de Courcy, discouraged by this check, or perhaps desirous of securing the plunder he had already collected, left Derry, and retired into Down.

After O'Neill had robbed the English of their plunder at Larne, he returned to lead

* It is recorded in the annals of the Four Masters that Mac Etigh, one of the people of Keenaght, profited by the general confusion to plunder the altar of the great church of Derry, and stole the "four most valuable cups in Ireland," which were called the Mac

Riabach, the Mac Solas, the goblet of O'Muldory, and the goblet of O'Doherty called Cam-Corainn (the crooked goblet). These he broke and took off their jewels and brilliant gems. On the third day after the robbery the jewels and the thief were discovered, and he was hanged by order of Flaherty O'Muldory.

his own tribe, the Kinel-Owen (the people of Tyrone), against the Kinel-Connell (Tirconnell), who had confederated against them with a neighbouring clan. He first attacked and defeated their allies, the men of Orgial, in a pitched battle, and then invaded Tirconnell, marched victoriously as far as the plain of Moy-Ith, and returned to his own country, sweeping off a large booty in cattle and other property. Having secured this, he marched back to Moy-Ith, to fight the Kinel-Connell, but the latter treated with him, and the two tribes agreed to live in peace with each other. About the same time, towards the end of the year 1198, a reconciliation was also effected between Cathal Croivdearg and Cathal Carrach, the two claimants to the crown of Connaught, and the latter was received at the court of Connaught, and was enriched with gifts of lands.

The return of Cathal Carrach to Connaught was, however, only the signal for new treason. He had formed a secret league with William de Burgh of Munster, and by the promise of great advantages to that chief and the English under his command, secured his assistance in the enterprise he now meditated. Cathal Croivdearg found himself suddenly attacked in his own court, and, totally unprovided for defence, fled to the court of O'Neill of Tyrone, and left the crown of Connaught in the possession of his rival.

These events occurred early in the year 1199. The English under John de Courcy had already recommenced their depredations in the north, and had marched three successive armies into Tyrone, the last of which had been so entirely defeated by O'Neill at Donaghmore, that they had never ceased their flight until they had passed over Toom Bridge. At the same time Roderic O'Dunslevy had joined with the English of Meath in invading the southern part of Ulster, and plundering Armagh. But when the unfortunate king of Connaught arrived at O'Neill's court, that prince, touched with commiseration for his sufferings, not only undertook to assist him with all his power, but immediately reconciled himself both with his Irish enemies and with the English, and induced John de Courcy of Ulster, and Hugh de Lacy of Meath, to join in the league of the northern chiefs for restoring Cathal to his throne. The new king of Connaught was prepared to resist this formidable confederacy, and with the chiefs of Connaught

and William de Burgh and his English of Limerick, suddenly fell upon O'Neill and some of the Irish clans under his command, and defeated them with great loss.

O'Neill was equally unfortunate when joined by his English confederates, for later in the year John de Courcy with the English of Ulster, and Hugh de Lacy with those of Meath, joined their Irish allies, and marched to Kilmaedugh in Galway. Here they were attacked by the army of Connaught and their English auxiliaries from Munster, and a fierce battle ensued, which exhibited the new phenomenon in Ireland of English fighting against English in the hostile ranks. Cathal Carrach was on this occasion victorious, and the English, after suffering great slaughter, fled from the field, Hugh de Lacy to his own possessions in Meath, while John de Courcy took a more northerly course, closely pursued till he arrived at Lough-Ree, where he was surrounded by his enemies, and many more of the English were slain before they could escape across the lake in boats. It is said by some of the Irish chroniclers that, soon after this battle, Hugh de Lacy captured Cathal Carrach by stratagem, and confined him in one of his castles in Meath, until he purchased his liberty by a heavy ransom.

The misfortunes of Hugh O'Neill did not end with this defeat, for early next year, (A.D. 1200), he was deposed by his own people, who elected Connor O'Lochlin to rule over Tyrone. This chief was soon afterwards slain in one of the conflicts consequent on this revolution, which, with the numerous domestic quarrels that now arose among the clans of Ulster, relieved Cathal Carrach of all apprehensions on that side, and his confidence arose to such a height, that he ventured even to provoke the English government at Dublin, probably by some incursions into the parts of Leinster bordering on Meath. Meiler fitz Henry, who had succeeded Hamo de Valentiis, as deputy, marched, early in 1200, into Connaught, with the army of Leinster, and remained two nights at Clonmacnois, where he plundered the town and its churches.

A new change now took place in the fortunes of Cathal Croivdearg, who, relinquishing all hope of assistance from the north, threw himself on the protection of MacCarthy of Desmond, and William de Burgh, and the latter was induced, by the hope of greater advantages, to desert his ally Cathal Carrach, and espouse the cause of his rival. Early

in 1201, De Burgh and his new protegee, with the English and Irish forces, entered Connaught, and marched first to Tuam, proceeding thence, by Oran and Elphin, to the monastery of Ath-da-lo-arg, or Boyle, in the county of Roscommon, where they encamped. Cathal Carrach came immediately to meet them, and after the armies had remained some time in presence, the king was slain in one of the numerous partial engagements which every day witnessed. The kingdom then submitted to Cathal Croivdearg, and he was restored to the crown. But Cathal was no friend to the English, and, although he had profited by their services on this occasion, he now treacherously conspired to deprive them of their reward. It was pretended that the conduct of the English excited suspicions of treasonable designs against the prince whom they had but newly placed on the throne of Connaught, and when they demanded the fulfilment of

the promises by which Cathal had induced them to march to his assistance, they were treated with scorn; and William de Burgh only saved his small army by a hasty flight into Munster.

Such was the condition of Ireland at the close of the twelfth century. The Irish had again become a prey to their invaders, betrayed by their own disagreements. But the English government at Dublin had likewise sunk into weakness; while the great English lords of Ulster, Meath, and Munster, ruled their territories at their own will, and made war upon their neighbours like so many independent sovereigns. We shall soon find this new state of things exercising a baneful influence on the fortunes of the island.

During the events related above, on the sixth of April, 1199, Richard, king of England, had departed from the scene, and was succeeded on the throne by his brother John earl of Mortain and lord of Ireland.

CHAPTER XV.

GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS AND HIS TOPOGRAPHY OF IRELAND.



AMONG the earlier English visitors to Ireland was, as it has been already stated, an ecclesiastic who claimed kindred with most of the first adventurers,

Gerald de Barri, or, to use the title by which he is more commonly known, Giraldus Cambrensis. He was born about the year 1146, was distinguished in his childhood by an incipient taste for literature, and was educated by his uncle David fitz Gerald, bishop of St. David's, who has already been mentioned in this history. He afterwards studied in the university of Paris, took holy orders, and, returning to his native country soon after the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, obtained church preferment in England and in Wales. He was subsequently elected to succeed his uncle in the see of St. David's, but the king, from some feelings of jealousy, refused to ratify the choice. Giraldus returned to Paris, but he was soon in England again, and we have seen him, in 1184, accompanying his brother Philip de Barri to Ireland. He remained there two years,

diligently inquiring into the history and condition of the country, but under the influence of all the prejudices with regard to the natives which appear to have actuated his countrymen at that time. He rendered himself obnoxious to the native ecclesiastics by the bitterness with which he openly inveighed against the corruptions and errors of the Irish church, and he informs us himself, that, on one occasion, he made it a charge against the Irish Christians that they had had no martyrs. The archbishop of Cashel, who was present, and bore in mind the recent fate of Becket, replied that this was true, for the native Irish were too pious to make martyrs of their clergy, but that a people had now come to settle in Ireland who not only knew how to make martyrs, but who were very ready to put their knowledge in practice.*

Giraldus remained in Ireland about two years and then returned to be appointed, as we have already stated, as the tutor of prince John, and he appears to have finally quitted Ireland early in 1186. He speaks in his writings more than once of the interest he

* Girald. Cambr. Topog. Hibern. Dist. iii., c. 32.

felt in the affairs of that island, and of the pains he took to investigate its history and antiquities, and to collect information relating to the condition of the land and its inhabitants.* He tells us that he expended no less than five years in committing to writing the result of his researches, the first three of which were occupied with the composition of his *Topography* (*Topographia Hiberniæ*), while the other two were devoted to writing the history of the Anglo-Norman invasion, which he published under the title of "*Hibernia Expugnata, sive Historia Vaticinalis*." The *Topography* appears to have been completed about the year 1187, and is distributed into three books, or, as they are entitled according to a fashion at that time, distinctions (*distinctiones*). When this work was completed, Giraldus recited the three parts, on three successive days, before a public audience of the University of Oxford, and each day he gave a sumptuous feast. On the first day he entertained the poor people of the town; on the second, the doctors and most distinguished students; and on the third, he feasted the other scholars, and the burghers and soldiers of the town.† This ostentatious exhibition shows the interest which at that time everything relating to Ireland excited in this country, and the novelty of the information which Giraldus now gave to the world.

The greatest ignorance, indeed, appears still to have prevailed in England with respect to the internal condition and character

of the sister island; and the description which Giraldus has left us, however defective and prejudiced, is our solitary authority for the manners and condition of the Irish at the time when the English invaders went to take possession of their country. We easily see that he was a man strongly biassed in his personal feelings, and that his praise and dispraise must be received with great caution. He shared fully in the scornful contempt which the first invaders felt for the people against whom they were warring, and he naturally sees everything Irish in its worst light; and we have to add to this another disadvantage, that his love of the marvellous leads him to dwell most on those characteristics and circumstances which were exceptions to the natural state of the country and people. If we make allowance for these defects, we shall no doubt find in the *Topography* of Giraldus as correct an account of the land and people he describes as we generally receive from persons who describe a country which they have visited as strangers.

Of the three divisions of this book, the first treats of the natural productions of Ireland, the second of its wonders, and the third of its inhabitants. From what Giraldus says of the origin of the latter, it is evident that the ethnological fables relating to the colonies by which the island was peopled, given in our earlier chapters, were popular there in the latter half of the twelfth century.

The English historian describes the Irish in general as handsome in form and in face, and he wonders that such should be the case, since he assures us that their children, when young, were so far neglected by their parents that they had to trust almost to chance alone for their education; neither cradles, nor swathing, nor any other artifice to assist nature, were in use among them. He describes them, when grown up, as indolent and careless in their habits, neglecting agriculture and not willingly applying themselves to mechanical arts, but living wild in the country, their chief property consisting in herds of cattle which it was their ordinary occupation to attend, and they are described as "living like beasts in society with their beasts." Their chief enjoyment, he says, was to do no work, and the riches they esteemed most, to be free from all control, and to live undisturbed in their native barbarism. Their clothes, he tells us, were generally of woollen cloth, usually black, which was the natural colour of their wool, and made in a

* Thus, in speaking of the arrival of Philip de Barri, in 1183, he says, "*Venit eodem navigio et alius Stephanidæ nepos, Philippi frater, tam avunculum quam fratrem plurimum consilio juvans, et tam insulæ situm et naturam quam primævam gentis originem diligenter explorans.*"—*Hibern. Expugn. lib. ii., c. 18.* And again, when speaking of prince John's voyage in 1185, "*transmissi sunt cum ipso et eodem navigio clerici plures, quorum unus specialius a patre cum filio directus, naturalis historiæ diligens perscrutator, per biennium tunc in insula et ante moram faciens, tanquam pretium laboris et præmium, tam libri Vaticinalis quam Topographiæ secum materiam reportavit.*"—*Ib. c. 31.*

† There was a great deal of vanity in the character of Giraldus Cambrensis, which shows itself, not only in every instance in his writings where an opportunity occurred of speaking of himself, but in a large book which he wrote on the acts of his own life, under the title "*De gestis Giraldi laboriosis.*" In this autobiographical treatise he describes the pompous publication of his *Topographia Hiberniæ*, at Oxford, with great self-complacency, and concludes with the boast that it was—"Sumptuosa quidem res et nobilis, quia renovata sunt quodammodo autentica et antiqua in hoc facto poetarum tempora, nec rem similem in Anglia factam vel præsens ætas vel ulla recolit antiquitas."—*De Gestis lib. ii., c. 16.*

coarse manner. They consisted of a small cloak or hood thrown over their shoulders and back, and reaching to their elbows; to which garment they often sewed, by way of finery, pieces of cloth of different colours. Under this they wore a coarse woollen coat or frock, and below breeches and hose all in one. They rode on horseback without saddles, stirrups, or spurs, and with a bridle of a very simple construction; and they usually carried in their hands a stick, bent at one end, with which they guided their horses, and which served them for other purposes. We cannot fail to recognise here the modern shillelagh. Giraldus notices as a remarkable circumstance, that the Irish women rode on horseback astride like the men. They went to battle with their bodies uncovered, pretending that defensive armour was an impediment and a proof of the want of courage. They carried three kinds of arms in war, a long lance, a couple of javelins, and a large and formidable axe. The latter was their favourite weapon, and one which they used with great skill and effect. They had originally learnt the use of it from the Norwegians and Ostmen who came armed with it to their shores. They also used stones as missiles, with considerable execution.

Giraldus speaks with horror of the universal practice among the Irish of carrying this terrible axe in their hands in their ordinary intercourse with the world, even in their social meetings; and he attributes to the readiness with which it was used and its aptness for putting into effect sudden feelings of anger and revenge, much of the sanguinary character which then distinguished the Irish, and the numerous deeds of violence of which they were guilty. Against this, he says, punning in his Latin, there is no security; the bow requires bending, the spear must be poised, the sword has to be drawn from its scabbard, and thus gives warning of danger, but the axe, ready always in the hand, was raised and descended in an instant, and no foresight could evade the blow.* Giraldus represents the danger of

this weapon as being increased by the changeable and treacherous temper of the bearers; for he assures us that it was one of the most remarkable traits in the character of the Irish, that it was necessary to be most on your guard in your transactions with them, when their professions of good faith were warmest, and when their behaviour was least threatening; and he states that they were neither bound by promises nor oaths. He informs us, moreover, that their usual mode of binding themselves in mutual alliance was as follows; the two persons who would thus be bound met at some sacred place (a church or monastery), and there took their oaths of mutual fidelity; then each carried the other three times round the church; next they entered the church and renewed their oaths on the relics of the saints, the most solemn of all obligations in the Catholic middle-ages, because it was believed that the saints whose bones were there, incurred the responsibility and the duty of punishing the breach of the oath by either of the parties bound. After this they partook in the service of the mass. Nor was this considered sufficient, for, in cases of greater importance, each party drew blood from his own body, which was drunk by the other; and this form, borrowed, as Giraldus remarks, from the older observances of gentilism, was looked upon as the most portentous of all obligations, and the one of which the breach was the most fatal to him who neglected to observe it.*

Another vice which Giraldus describes as generally characteristic of the Irish, and one which seems but too well confirmed by their history, is the prevalence of family feuds and dissensions, contrasted with another characteristic, which it will be necessary to bear in mind to understand many of the events we have to record, their faithful attachment to their foster-brothers and foster-children, which were found in almost every family. While their natural kinsmen are alive, he says, they persecute them to the grave; when they are killed by others, they pursue their feud against the slayer from one generation to another.

* "Non hæc ut gladius evaginatur, non ut arcus tenditur, non ut lancea protenditur; citra omnem præparatum parum elevata, læthale vulnus infligit. Ad manum igitur, imo in manu semper et in promptu est, quod ad mortem sat est. A securibus itaque nulla securitas. Si securum te reputes, securim senties. Te sponte in periculum mittis, si securim admittis, et securitatem amittis."—Topogr. Hibern. Dist. iii., c. 21.

Some of the early manuscripts of Giraldus Cam-

brensis have marginal drawings of the Irish, as described in the text, made, no doubt, by persons who were acquainted with them. Three of these, copied from one of the manuscripts, are introduced in the initial letter at the head of the present chapter; they represent the Irish costume, and the manner of carrying the axe, as well as an Irish harper, a class of persons of whom Giraldus speaks at some length.

* Topogr. Hibern. Dist. iii., c. 21

This it must be confessed is a vice peculiar, not to a people, but to a particular stage in the progress of society; and several of the failings of the Irish pointed out by Giraldus are exactly those which their enemies would be most likely to lay to their charge, and to exaggerate, if not invent. Treachery and craftiness are qualities naturally assumed by people who are subjected to the oppression and tyranny of those who are stronger than themselves, be the latter kinsmen or strangers. In other respects Giraldus is more indulgent, and he was, perhaps, not far wide of the truth when describing the Irish of his day in general terms as apt to carry all their passions and feelings to extremes—"when they are bad, there are no people worse; when good, you will find none better."*

Among the barbarous practices ascribed to the Irish by Giraldus Cambrensis, he describes one which has often been a source of amusement to modern writers. He says that there was a certain tribe in Tirconnell, the king of which was inaugurated with the following barbarous ceremonies. The whole of the people being collected in a circle round, a white mare was brought forward, and the new king having gone through certain degrading ceremonies which Giraldus only hints at, the animal was slain, cut in pieces, and boiled, and a bath was made of the broth, in which the king was placed up to the chin, and of which he drank while in this position, by bringing his lips to the level of the liquor, while he ate of the horse-flesh, which was handed to him for the purpose. This ceremony having been gone through, the whole people saluted him as their king.

The complaints made by Giraldus against the manners of the clergy are quite as severe as those which the laity incur at his hands. According to his report, they had been so negligent in instructing the flocks committed to their charge, that the latter neither paid tithes nor first fruits, nor did they frequent their churches with due reverence, or show obedience to the canons. The clergy in general are represented as being remarkable for their continence and for the patience with which they endured fasting and mortifications; but they are stated to have too

often lost the merit of this abstinence in the day, by indulging in eating, and especially in drinking, by night. The blame of these irregularities is thrown upon the prelates of the Irish church, who are represented as passing their time within their cells in religious contemplation, instead of attending actively to the affairs of their dioceses; and this peculiarity in their character Giraldus attributes to the fact of their being always chosen from the monasteries, rather than from the secular clergy, and their retaining naturally their monastic habits.

In one respect Giraldus does justice to the Irish, for he assures us that of all nations with which he was acquainted, they excelled in the practice of music, and in skill on their favourite instrument the harp. He intimates moreover, that Ireland was the source from which chiefly the Welsh and Scotch learnt their minstrelsy, and in this opinion he is supported by the old chroniclers which sometimes speak of Welsh and Scottish princes bringing over Irish bards to improve their own subjects in the art. Of the importance given to this art by the Irish themselves, we have sufficient proofs in the power said to have been held by the bardic class in the earlier ages, and in the care with which at the period of which we are speaking, the deaths of distinguished bards are noted in the annals. Thus, under the year 1185, we find entered in the annals of the Four Masters, that "Maelisa O'Daly, chief poet of Ireland and Scotland, lord of Corcree and Corca-Adain (in Meath), a man illustrious for his poetry, hospitality, and nobility, died while on a pilgrimage at Clonard." And again, in 1187, we find it recorded that "Gelasius, the son of Oilíoll O'Brien, prior of Hy-Many, a historian, scribe, and poet, died." The poetic or bardic character was one that always commanded respect.

In his account of the physical characteristics of the island, Giraldus corrects several of the statements of the old writers, who had hitherto been almost the only authorities on the subject. He expresses his surprise at the fact that bogs and lakes, so peculiar to this island, are often found in elevated positions, and on the tops of mountains; and he speaks with admiration of the lofty mountains of the interior; the fair plains, which however he describes as being too much restricted by the extensive forests with which all parts of the island were covered; the richness of its soil, especially in pastures;

* "Est enim gens hæc cunctis fere in actibus immoderata, et in omnes affectus vehementissima. Unde et sic mali, deterrimi sunt, et nusquam pejores; ita et in bonis, meliores non reperies."—Topogr. Hibern. Dist. iii., c. 28.

its numerous and extensive lakes and islands; and the abundant rivers, of which the Shannon was the queen. Giraldus subscribes to the old belief that Ireland was free from snakes, frogs, toads, and all venomous and noxious reptiles, and he brings forward several examples from older writers, and from his own time, to show that Irish earth or any articles of the native produce of the island, were antidotes against poison or the bites of venomous animals. It was customary, he says, to make girdles of Irish leather and sell them in other countries to be used as preservatives. He adds that in his time a frog was found in the long grass of the pastures near Waterford, and that it was brought alive to Roger le Poer, who then commanded in that city, and he exhibited it in full court before a numerous assembly of English and Irish, who all looked upon it as something prodigious. At length Donald king of Ossory, who happened to be present, shaking his head gravely and emitting a deep sigh, exclaimed, "This vermin has brought very bad news into Ireland!" "intimating," says the historian, "that the appearance of an animal so foreign to the climate of Ireland, was a sign attendant on the English invasion, and of the approaching conquest and subjection of the land." So convinced was Giraldus of the very air of Ireland being an antidote to poison, that he rejoices in the impossibility of Irishmen being guilty (among their other crimes) of that of poisoning one another.* The taste of the Anglo-Norman scholar for natural history, a subject which at that time was attracting considerable attention in the schools in England and abroad, is exhibited in a long account of the various birds and quadrupeds found in different parts of the island; and among other curious anecdotes, he assures us with great gravity that the Irish cocks crow according to a different rule from that of the cocks of any other country.†

Marvellous information of this kind was indeed in accordance with the taste of his age, and Giraldus has introduced much of it in his description of Ireland, which has this importance, that, besides the light it throws in some cases upon Irish manners, it shows us the antiquity of many of the Irish popular legends of the present day. The second division of the *Topographia Hiberniæ* is devoted to the wonders of the island.

* *Topogr. Hibern. Dist. i., cc. 23, 24.*

† *Ib. Dist. ii., c. 25.*

Under the head of marvellous islands, we are told of one on the western coast of Connaught, called Aren, and said to have been consecrated by St. Brandan, in which dead bodies never experienced corruption, and there, it is added, people kept the bodies of their fathers, grandfathers, and more remote progenitors, arranged in order, so that they might visit and contemplate their ancestors for many generations. It is most probable that this story was built upon some confused account of the remains of a cemetery belonging to the earlier ages. In the north of Munster, we are told, was a lake containing two islands, in the smaller of which neither man nor animal of the female sex could enter, without being exposed to instant death; in the other no living being could die, and when the inhabitants were reduced to that state that death alone could relieve them, it was necessary to carry them to the opposite shore before they could expire. The waters of a fountain in Munster are described as possessing the quality of turning the hair white; and Giraldus assures us that he had himself seen a man whose beard was perfectly white on one side, where it had been bathed in the water of this fountain, while the other side retained its original colour. On the other hand, there was a fountain in Ulster, the water of which possessed the quality, that hair once washed in it would never afterwards change colour; and this well he tells us was frequented by women and effeminate men who were afraid of having grey heads. Among other wonders of this kind, Giraldus tells us of an extensive lake in Ulster—Lough Neagh—from which the river Bann took its rise, of which tradition reported that the ground it covers was once a fertile and populous district, remarkable, however, for the extreme wickedness of its inhabitants. There was a fountain in the land, with a lid and fastening, and an old prophecy stated that some day the well would be left uncovered and the water would overflow the whole country and drown the inhabitants for their crimes. It happened at last that a woman went to draw water, and just as she had filled her jug and was preparing to fasten the lid of the well, she suddenly heard her child crying at a distance. In her haste to fly to its assistance, she forgot to fasten the well, and when she would have returned to supply the omission, she beheld the water flowing over in every direction, and it continued thus flowing and flowing until the whole of the devoted district

had disappeared under the smooth surface of Lough Neagh. This will be recognised as a legend which is still told by the Irish peasantry. Giraldus adds that the fishermen on the lake declared, as a proof of the authenticity of the story, that often, when the waters of the lake were tranquil, they could see at the bottom the lofty round towers, so peculiar to Ireland, which had belonged to the wretched people who had merited so heavy a judgment by the enormity of their sins.*

Stories like the above show how little Ireland was known even to those who dwelt within its boundaries; they are characteristic rather of the age than of the particular credulity of the man who relates them.

Giraldus appears to have paid little attention to the ancient monuments existing in Ireland in his time, which must have been very numerous, and in a far more perfect condition than at present. We have just seen him alluding to the singular round towers, which have given rise to so many conflicting, and we may say often absurd, opinions among modern antiquaries; and the term he applies to them—ecclesiastical towers—with the style of their masonry and other circumstances, seem to confirm the opinion now gaining ground, that they really are nothing more than ecclesiastical structures, and that they are by no means of so great antiquity as is commonly supposed. Giraldus also speaks of the remains of Celtic monuments in the plain of Kildare, near Naas, and alludes to the legend which appears to have been popular in England and in Ireland, at least from the time when Geoffrey of Monmouth's British History was published, that the great circles of stones at Stonehenge in England had been transferred by supernatural power. They had been brought, it was pretended, from Africa by the giants of the primeval ages, who, settling in Ireland, erected them at Kildare; thence by the agency of Merlin, and at the desire of Aurelius Ambrosius the British king, they were carried to Salisbury plain, and there re-erected in the same order as they had occupied in Ireland. Giraldus states, that some of them which had been left behind, were still to be seen near Naas, resem-

bling in every respect those he had seen in Wiltshire.*

We have further in Giraldus some slight allusions to that interesting subject, the fairy mythology of the Irish, more especially as regards the then general belief in werwolves, or men who, by witchcraft, turned themselves or others into wolves, a superstition which prevailed throughout the whole of Europe, and which in many parts is not yet eradicated from the minds of the peasantry.† He relates an adventure of an Irish priest with two of these werwolves in the woods of Meath, which partakes throughout of the character of a fairy tale, and which made so much noise in Ireland at that time, that Giraldus assures us he was invited to an ecclesiastical synod as he was passing through Meath two years after, the principal object of which was to discuss the question of werwolves, and more especially to take into consideration the adventure of the priest, and a question relating to the administration of the church rites which rose out of it. The priest was there, and told his story, and he added that, among other things, he had ventured to put to the man-wolf the question, whether the foreign people who had invaded the island would gain the upper hand permanently? to which the wolf replied, "On account of the sins of our people and the enormity of their vices, the anger of God has fallen upon this evil generation and given it into the hands of enemies. As long, therefore, as that people shall observe the commands of God, and walk in his ways, it shall continue firm and unshaken. But if by intercourse with us that people shall degrade themselves with our vices, without doubt they also will provoke the divine vengeance." This shows us how universally men's minds were preoccupied with the fearful events that were passing around them. Giraldus tells us in conclusion, that the priest's confession, under the seals of the ecclesiastics assembled on this occasion, was transmitted to the pope for final judgment.‡

It would be unfair to quote this as a proof of the credulity of Giraldus, since he took it on the authority of an assembly of bishops and abbots.

The church legends occupy no small space in the pages of Giraldus, for Ireland was

* "*Hujus autem eventus argumentum est non improbabile, quod piscatores aquæ illius turres ecclesiasticas, quæ more patriæ arctæ sunt et altæ, necnon et rotundæ, sub undis manifeste sereno tempore conspiciunt, et extraneis transeuntibus reique casum admirantibus frequenter ostendunt.*"—Topogr. Hibern. Dist. ii., c. 9.

* Topogr. Hibern. Dist. ii., c. 18, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, Hist. Brit. lib. viii., c. 10.

† Wolves were not uncommon in the Irish forests in the twelfth century, and even at a later period.

‡ Girald. Cambr. Topogr. Hibern. Dist. ii., c. 19.

full of ecclesiastical wonders. He speaks with admiration of the apples of St. Kevin, which by the saint's command grew on willows round the church-yard of Glendalough; of the crows of the same spot, which fasted annually on St. Kevin's day; of the ducks of St. Coleman, in a lake in Leinster, and of an archer of Robert fitz Stephen, who shot one of them, and tried in vain to cook its flesh, and who was soon afterwards struck with a miserable death; and of a variety of other objects equally miraculous. His attention was specially drawn to the sacred fire of St. Brigid at Kildare, which had been preserved without interruption since the days of the saint, and probably from a much earlier period. The number of twenty nuns was always preserved complete, and one of these watched the fire by night in her turn, until each twentieth night, when the last nun of the twenty, having administered the usual fuel, exclaimed, "Brigid, watch thy fire, for it is thy turn to-night;" and then she left the fire to take care of itself, and it was invariably found burning in the morning. None but women were ever allowed to tend upon the fire, or even to approach it; and the place in which it was kept was surrounded with a circular hedge, within which no male creature was allowed to pass. We see here no doubt the remains of old druidical superstitions. It appears that when the English entered the island, they often treated these legends of the natives with contempt. Giraldus assures us that one of the soldiers of earl Strongbow, while at Kildare, leaped into the sacred enclosure, and blew the holy fire of St. Brigid with his mouth, and that he was immediately struck with madness, and blew into the face of every body he met, crying, "thus I blew the fire of St. Brigid!" His companions seized and bound him, and then he called for water, which he drunk and immediately expired. Another would have followed his example, but he had only passed one leg over the hedge, when he was drawn back by his companions, who found that the foot and leg which had passed the hedge were dried up, and the offender was lame during the rest of his life.*

We are further informed that there was a mill of St. Lucherin in Ossory which could not by any force be made to work on a Sunday, and that it would on no day of the week grind corn which had been stolen or obtained dishonestly. At Fovena in Meath, also, there was a remarkable mill, which had

been cut in the rock by St. Fechin, by whose ordinance, no woman was permitted to enter into the mill or into the church of the saint. Giraldus tells us that when Hugh de Lacy passed this place in one of his expeditions, an English soldier seized a woman and, ignorant of the sacred character of the place, carried her violently into the mill, and that the following night he died in horrible torments.* The English historian gives several instances of the supposed punishment of his countrymen for their sacrilegious rapacity and violence.

Giraldus speaks briefly of two Irish religious legends, which appear to have been first made public in the twelfth century, though they soon became celebrated above almost all other legends throughout the Catholic world. The first of these was the tale of the marvellous voyages of St. Brendan, the legendary navigator of the western ocean, who, after meeting with a variety of extraordinary adventures, reached at length the terrestrial paradise, and then came back to his own country to acquaint his brethren with the discovery.† The book of his adventures was published in the twelfth century, in Latin, and copies were soon multiplied and translated into most of the languages of western Europe.

The other remarkable legend alluded to is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on the island in Lough Dearg, which still continues to be a place of devout pilgrimage among the Irish. Giraldus, who perhaps speaks only from hearsay, tells that the island consisted of two parts, one of which was cheerful and beautiful, and contained a church which was "visibly visited" by the angels and the saints; the other half was rough and thorny, and peopled only by demons, and those who passed a night there were subjected to the torments of purgatory. Those who underwent this trial in penitence obtained thereby the forgiveness of their past sins.‡ It appears, in fact, that the island in Lough Dearg contained a cave, from which probably issued mephitic vapours like those of the oracular caves of Greece and Italy, and that the Irish monks either adopting unwittingly an older heathen legend, or turning the cave intentionally to their own advantage, declared it to be an entrance to the spiritual world, and built over the entrance a little hall or chapel.

* Topogr. Hibern. Dist. ii., cc. 51, 52.

† Topogr. Hibern. Dist. ii., c. 43.

‡ Girald. Topogr. Hibern. Dist. ii., c. 5.

* Topogr. Hibern. Dist. ii., cc. 34—36, and 48.

The legend they invented was this. When St. Patrick, they said, went about preaching the Gospel to the pagan Irish, he endeavoured to impress on the minds of the people the fear of the torments of purgatory and hell and the hope of the joys of paradise. But most of them scorned his teaching, and they told him that they would not be converted, unless they could behold with their own eyes the things he told them of. St. Patrick, thereupon, separated himself from his companions, and in solitary fasting and prayer beseeched God for his divine assistance. He was accordingly led by the Spirit to the then desert island in Lough Dearg, and there shown a cave, round and dark within, and heard the divine voice, which said to him, "Whosoever in true penitence and constancy of faith shall enter this cave for the space of a day and a night, shall be purified therein from all the sins which he has committed against God during his life, and shall there behold not only the torments of the wicked, but, if he persevere steadfastly in the love of God, shall be a witness also of the joys of the blessed." St. Patrick immediately built an oratory on the spot; he also inclosed the cave, and placed the door upon it, and gave the key to a society of regular canons whom he placed there to watch over it. He who would run the risk of this trial, which was surrounded by all the terrors and difficulties which could be imagined to give it importance, was to obtain first a licence from the bishop of the diocese, and armed with this document he presented himself before the canons in the island in Lough Dearg.

This legend appears to have been totally unknown to the writers of the life of St. Patrick previous to the time of which we are now speaking; and if it did exist locally before the middle of the twelfth century, it was certainly not known beyond the limits of the district, and probably had not long received much consideration there. It owed its first great publicity to a Benedictine monk of the abbey of Saltrey, in Huntingdonshire, named Henry, and to Gilbert de Luda, abbot of Louth in Lincolnshire, who had perhaps visited Ireland and made acquaintance with the monks of this district. From them they learnt the story of an Irish knight named Owen, who, after having long served king Stephen in his wars in England, returned to his native country, and there, repenting of the numerous acts of violence and sacrilege which he had committed in

such questionable service, went to his bishop, and by his advice ventured on the hazardous enterprise of visiting the purgatory,—hazardous it was represented to be, for many, not sufficiently strong in their faith, were pretended to have died miserably in the trial. The knight Owen, according to the legend, passed without injury, though with much fear, through the usual visions of purgatory, hell, and paradise, and returned to give a full account of what he had seen to the bishop who had been his adviser. This visit is said to have taken place in the year 1153. Henry of Saltrey committed this narrative to writing, in Latin, and published it in England, where it caused a great sensation, and it has found a place in many of the larger chronicles. The Latin narrative was copied and multiplied with amazing rapidity; in a few years it was translated into French, and before long it found its way into other languages; and the wonders of St. Patrick's purgatory were soon sung in verse by the more pious minstrels in most parts of Europe. The consequence was that, during many ages, visitors from all parts of the world crowded to the sacred island in Lough Dearg, and their offerings enriched the place and the church of the diocese. The gross superstition of these pilgrimages became at length, at a much later period, a subject of scandal among Christians, and they were forbidden by the pope, and the cave destroyed. But neither the pope's proscription, nor the destruction of the original cave and the building which covered it, or the ridicule of those who disbelieved in the story, were sufficient to put an end to the practice of pilgrimages to the purgatory of St. Patrick.*

It is quite necessary that we should make ourselves acquainted with the notions of Giraldus relating to the Irish, for they serve to exhibit to us the spirit which influenced most of the transactions between the two peoples in that and the following age. It will of course be understood that he intended his descriptions to apply to the mass of the people and clergy, rather than to the higher ranks of either class. It is, however, the description of a despised and persecuted people, drawn by a zealous partizan of those who persecuted and scorned them.

* The history of this place, and of the superstitions connected with it, forms the subject of a volume by the author of the present work, entitled, "St. Patrick's Purgatory; an Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise, current during the Middle Ages."

BOOK II.

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND DURING THE THIRTEENTH, FOURTEENTH, AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.

CHAPTER I.

IRELAND UNDER THE REIGN OF KING JOHN.



BY the appointment of Meiler fitz Henry, one of the oldest of the invaders, to the government of Ireland, the sympathies of the earlier English settlers were likely to be conciliated, while his known character promised the vigour which seemed so necessary in the present condition of the English interests in the island. Thirty years had now passed since Henry II. landed in Ireland, and very little progress had really been made in the work of conquest, though much had been done towards breaking up the older reigning families of the island, and throwing their states into irretrievable anarchy. But a new set of enemies to the English government had been raised in those English chiefs, like the De Courcys, the De Lacys, and the De Burghs, whose immense grants of territory had enabled them to assume regal state, and who became in the sequel the greatest foes to that tranquillity and good government, the very existence of which implied a limitation of their power of doing injury.

William De Burgh and John De Courcy were the first of these English chieftains who provoked the resentment of king John's deputy. The first, from his city of Limerick, had presumed to make war upon, or enter into treaties with, the Irish princes, without consulting or listening to the government of Dublin. One of these, a pretender to the crown of Thomond, he had seized and committed to prison in his castle. He had now collected all his strength to take vengeance on the king of Connaught for the perfidious manner in which he had rewarded his former services. The Irish annalists record that during the year 1204 he plundered the whole of Connaught, "both lay

and ecclesiastical." But he was recalled to make head against a more formidable enemy; for Meiler fitz Henry had received the orders of the king of England to proceed against his intractable subject, and he had collected an imposing force to reduce him to obedience. De Burgh on this occasion found no assistance from the native Irish, who hated him for his oppressions. The king of Connaught, who had been reduced to extremities by the merciless ravage of his kingdom, was the first to join the standard of the English deputy; and the O'Brian who now ruled Thomond followed his example. Both these princes marched to the siege of Limerick under Meiler fitz Henry—a new sight, to witness Irish princes assisting the king of England to reduce his own rebellious subjects. De Burgh, dismayed at the numerous army by which he was surrounded, immediately made his submission, and, renewing his homage to king John, he was allowed to retain his possessions. Meiler then entered into more formal treaties with the two Irish princes, both of whom consented to terms that were in the highest degree advantageous to the English crown. Cathal Croivdearg, the quondam champion of the Irish cause, who was to have rescued the whole island from the invaders, now agreed to give up into the hands of the king of England two parts of the kingdom of Connaught, to be selected by John, and to retain the third as his feudatory, paying for it an annual sum of a hundred marks. It is difficult to understand how the king of Connaught was induced to consent to terms so humiliating, but the close rolls still contain the entry of the letter in which king John expresses to Meiler his satisfaction at the arrangement, and directs him to choose for the king the two parts of Connaught which he should

consider most serviceable to the English crown, as containing the best towns and sea-ports, and affording the best situations for erecting castles. He then authorizes the deputy to take hostages for the fidelity of king Cathal; and directs him to take measures to recall by force all naifs and fugitives, with their goods and children, who might fly from the portion of Connaught he should select for the king, and to build and strengthen castles and towns for its security.

The English monarch is said to have been doubly irritated against John de Courcy, because he had declared, in intemperate language, his sympathies in the cause of the unfortunate prince Arthur. Violent hatred had arisen between the English lord of Ulster and the De Lacys of Meath, and it was to these, Hugh and Walter, the former of whom held the office of justiciary of Ireland, that the king directed his commission to seize upon De Courcy, and send him in custody to England. The history of John de Courcy's subsequent fate is obscure. He appears to have been occupied with interfering in the mutual hostilities which still desolated the two rival states of Tirconnell and Tyrone, when, in 1203, he received intelligence that an army under the two De Lacys was marching against him. A battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Down, in which the De Lacys are said to have been defeated, and compelled to make a speedy retreat into Meath. The Irish chronicles tell us, that in the year following, 1204, while William de Burgh was plundering Connaught, the De Lacys again entered Ulster, and defeated John de Courcy, to whom they give the title of "the plunderer of churches and territories;" and they state that he fled into Tyrone, where he sought the protection of the Kinel-Owen; but, still pursued by his enemies, as far as Carrickfergus, he lost many of his party in his flight. De Courcy is not mentioned again in these chronicles, but it is said that he took refuge in the islands, and for some time lived in piracy and brigandage. He had married a daughter of Godfred, king of Man. Some say, that at last De Courcy made a voluntary surrender of his person; others relate how he was entrapped by the treachery of De Lacy; it is certain, that within a very short period of the time of which we are now speaking, he was a prisoner of king John. We have evidence that the king never pardoned him, in the fact, that after his death, which occurred

not long after his committal to prison, the earldom of Ulster was granted to Hugh de Lacy, thus again overloading with power and territory one who almost immediately followed the example and shared the fate of the man to whose ruin he had so eagerly contributed. Many stories were propagated relating to John de Courcy's latter days, founded on the fame of his extraordinary strength and daring, but totally inconsistent with known historical facts and dates. The Irish declared that all his misfortunes were a visitation from heaven, to punish him for having changed the church of Down from an abbey of black monks, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, to a foundation in honour of St. Patrick, which they described as depriving the master in order to set up the servant; and a story was current among them, that when, after having been set at liberty, and restored to his possessions (as they pretended) by king John, he attempted to return to Ireland, he was constantly driven back by violent gusts of wind, and that at length he was told in a vision, that it was God's will that he should never set foot in Ireland again, as a punishment for the offence just alluded to.

The subjugation of these two lords had given great strength to the English power in Ireland. In Munster, both Cork and Limerick were now in the possession of the English, who built in the latter city a strong fort to keep the people of Desmond in check. The death of Donald mac Carthy, who had so often harassed the English in this quarter, and troubles among his subjects consequent on that event, tended to strengthen the English power. In Ulster, however, when the overthrow of John de Courcy had relieved the Irish from a terrible neighbour, the intestine commotions began again with increased fury, especially between the people of Tirconnell and those of Tyrone, and the English took every opportunity to interfere. The annals for two or three years tell of nothing but mutual feuds and slaughters, and frequent plundering expeditions. O'Donnell, chief of the Kinel-Connell, and Hugh O'Neill, chief of the Kinel-Owen, are the two names which occur most frequently on these records. Early in 1206, O'Donnell led two plundering expeditions into Tyrone, in the second of which he was pursued by some of the clans, and only carried away his booty with difficulty and with the loss of many of his men. Later on in the same year, Hugh de Lacy marched into Tyrone with the English of Meath and Leinster,

and burnt the churches and corn, but gained no booty, though in this latter respect he was more successful in a subsequent inroad into Kenaght. In 1207, O'Donnell of Tirconnell invaded Fermanagh, but, while he was collecting his plunder, the inhabitants suddenly fell upon him and defeated him with great slaughter. O'Donnell himself, who is described as "the tower of valour and hospitality of the province in his time," was among the slain. The Irish annals mention at this time a great war among the English themselves, between Meiler fitz Henry, the deputy, and the De Mariscos or Mareschals, which devastated Leinster and Munster. This was followed by new troubles in Connaught, in the course of which the English territory of Meath was exposed to the depredations of the Irish, and this led to retaliations on the Irish border. In the year following, a feud was created in the south by the attempt to force a Welshman named David, a kinsman of Meiler, into the episcopal see of Waterford, in the course of which the new bishop was slain by O'Felan prince of the Desies. Then the feud between Tyrone and Tirconnell broke out again, and Hugh O'Neill, chief of the former district, invaded the territories of the Kinel-Connell, and was on his way to plunder Inisowen, when he was overtaken and defeated by the Kinel-Connell under their leader, another O'Donnell. In revenge the Kinel-Connell invaded Tyrone, and compelled Hugh O'Neill to conclude a peace with them, and to enter into an alliance "against the English and Irish who would oppose them;" from which we may probably conclude that the English of Ulster had taken part with O'Neill. Another feud, in Meath, led to the expulsion of an O'Rourke from the chieftainship of Breffny, and the substitution of another man more agreeable, as it appears, to the English of that province, in his place. To make matters worse, a dispute about the appointment of an archbishop of Armagh drew upon the English in Ireland the papal interdict; and about the same time king John was obliged to require the services of Meiler fitz Henry and Hugh de Lacy in England, and to leave the government of Ireland in the hands of Walter de Lacy and the archdeacon of Stafford.

Amidst such scenes of trouble and confusion, when the English monarch sought an excuse for his temporary absence from England, it was very easy to find causes requiring

his presence in Ireland.* The one publicly declared, arose from the rebellious conduct of the De Lacys and of William de Braose. The former, now lords of Ulster and Meath, had imitated John de Courcy in setting the authority of the crown at defiance. Both De Lacy and De Braose held large possessions in Wales and on the border, in addition to their extensive Irish estates, and they were there when the king summoned them to attend his court. The wife of William de Braose, Maude de St. Waleri, was remarkable for her beauty and pride; she was one of the most remarkable women of her time, and was no less active in the wars on the Welsh border than her husband. Her ostentatious display seems to have excited the jealousy of king John. It is related that on one occasion she presented to the queen three hundred cows and one bull, all of them white with red ears. On another occasion she boasted to her nephew, Baldwin earl of Albemarle, that she possessed twelve thousand milch cows; and she added that she had so many cheeses, that if a hundred of the strongest men in England were besieged in a castle, and they could throw cheeses all day without resting, they might defend themselves with her cheeses for a month. It is said that a scornful answer of this lady at length provoked the king's anger against her family. As he approached the borders of Wales, William de Braose made his escape into France; but his wife and their son William, unable to accompany him, fled into Ireland, to join Hugh de Lacy, who was their kinsman. An interesting narrative of the fate of this family, and of the king's

* Among other calamities with which the English possessions were visited at this time, the plague is said to have visited Leinster, and to have raged with great violence in Dublin; the neighbourhood of which city was also infested with bands of robbers.

At the Easter of this year, 1109, the citizens of Dublin assembling, according to custom, at a distance from the town, for the purpose of sport and festivity, some of the independent Irish from the mountains of Wicklow made a sudden incursion, fell upon the defenceless multitude, and killed three hundred before they reached a place of safety. The people of Dublin, who were strengthened by new arrivals of their kinsmen from Bristol, armed in revenge of this massacre, and following their enemies to their homes, retaliated severely. In memory of it, the magistrates and citizens held an annual feast on the place where their fellows had been slaughtered, and the singing boys of the cathedral went thither in procession, and, as a form of commemoration, proclaimed a mock challenge and defiance against the Irish. This ceremony, held at the place called the Wood of Cullen, has been continued to modern times.

proceedings in Ireland, are given by a contemporary writer, who appears to have been one of the Flemings who came into England in the service of king John.†

King John sailed for Ireland soon after the middle of June, 1210, with a formidable army. On the twentieth of June he was at Crook near Waterford, his place of landing. He proceeded thence without delay to Dublin, where we are told he was received with great joy. After remaining only two days there, he rode with his army through the land, viewing in his route many marvellous things, which the narrator declares would be hardly credible to those who had not seen them. From other accounts it would appear that the king proceeded into Meath to seize the estates of the De Laeys. There the king of Connaught, Cathal Croivdearg, whom our narrator describes as "one of the richest kings in Ireland," came to do his service with a large army. "But they were all on foot, and very strangely attired." Cathal himself was very poorly mounted, and attired in the same style as his subjects. King John immediately presented him with a very handsome courser, richly saddled and bridled, which the king of Connaught received with thanks, and then, taking the saddle off, mounted on it bare, "for he did not know how to ride with a saddle." And thus he rode a long way by the side of king John, who, as well as his Norman courtiers, was much entertained with his appearance. Hugh de Lacy, with Maude de Braose and her son William, had fled into Ulster, and thrown themselves into the strongly fortified town of Carrickfergus, where the king pursued them; and on hearing of his approach, they passed over to the Isle of Man, and thence escaped into Galway, where the Braoses were seized by the king's agents and carried back to him in Ireland, but De Lacy made his escape to France.

The English army continued the siege of Carrickfergus, which appears to have made an obstinate defence; we know from other authentic documents that the king was there some days. During this siege the king of

Kinel-Owen* (O'Neill of Tyrone) came to his service; but he lodged with his army in a meadow about the distance of a league from the camp of king John. The latter, when he was informed of his arrival, went to visit him, and when he came so near the Irish army that he could observe its position, he expressed his surprise that so large a host, for it is said that the Irish king to make more appearance had collected together not less than forty thousand men, could be crowded within a space that seemed incapable of containing more than two thousand. When the king of the Kinel Owen saw the English monarch approach, he went on foot to meet him with a party of his men, for it appears they also had no horses in their army. King John dismounted, and saluted and kissed O'Neill with great courtesy; and then he called an interpreter, and through him required of him that he should become his liege and pay him a yearly tribute for his land. The Irish king said he would consult of it, and, taking some of his advisers on one side, he conversed with them for awhile, and his interpreter came back to king John and said, "My lord replies, that he is well satisfied with your request, and that he desires much to be your man, and to do your will in everything; but he prays you as his lord to give him respite of one night, for his counsellors, whom he expects to-night, are not yet arrived, and to-morrow, when he has consulted with them, he will deliver you his answer, and will be ready to do all your will." King John swore his usual oath, by God's teeth! that the Irish king said well, and he would willingly grant the respite; and then he took his leave of the king of the Kinel-Owen, and each returned to his own army.

Next morning the king of the Kinel-Owen, who had other views than king John imagined, was up at break of day, and going out unexpectedly, attacked the English foragers, and those who were bringing provisions for the besieging army, and carried off an immense quantity of oxen, cows, sheep, palfreys, beasts of burden, as well as the men who were conducting them, which he took off into the mountains, and there posted himself and his army out of reach of the vengeance of the English. Thence he sent a messenger to king John that, if he liked, he might come there to treat with him. "Thus," says the narrator, "did king John lose the service of that king

* The Flemish writers call him, Li rois de Kanelyon.

† This curious contemporary chronicle was printed under the title "*Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et des Rois d'Angleterre*," by the Société de l'Histoire de France, 8vo. 1840. The account of the king's proceedings in Ireland will be found at pp. 111—115. The minute description of the events attending the royal progress leaves little doubt that the writer was present with the royal army, and an eye-witness of the events he relates, and it is, therefore, the only really authentic account of these events we have.

through the Irishman's love of plunder, which was a quality he could not lay aside."

After the capture of Carrickfergus, the king placed his own bailiffs in the town, and then came back to Dublin on his return to England. He was at Fishguard in Pembrokeshire on the 26th of August. He brought with him Maude and young William de Braose, who were committed prisoners to Corfe Castle, in the isle of Purbeck. There, according to the narrative of the writer quoted above, they were, by the king's orders, inclosed in a room with a sheaf of wheat and a piece of raw bacon for their only provisions. On the eleventh day their prison was opened, and they were found both dead; the mother was sitting upright between her son's legs with her head leaning back on his breast, whilst he also was in a sitting posture with his face turned towards the ground. Maude de Braose, in the last pangs of hunger, had gnawed the cheeks of her son, then probably dead, and after this effort she appeared to have fallen into the position in which she was found. When William de Braose, who was at Paris, was informed of the tragical fate of his wife and son, his grief was so poignant that he died in a few days. Such at least is the account given by our contemporary historian.

The two De Lacys, who had also found an asylum in France, are said to have been reduced to such distress, that they were obliged to seek employment as labourers in the garden of the abbey of St. Taurin, and their subsequent history is no less romantic than that of the De Braoses. After they had remained in concealment two or three years, the abbot conceiving some suspicion that they were persons of higher rank than they had represented themselves, is said to have interceded for them with the king of England, and to have obtained their pardon. King John, however, did not take them into favour until Walter had paid two thousand five hundred marks for his estates in Meath, and Hugh four thousand for the earldom of Ulster. They showed their gratitude to the abbot of St. Taurin, by bringing his nephew to Ireland, conferring on him the honour of knighthood, and granting him the lordship of Dingle.

If the troubles in England, which immediately followed king John's Irish expedition, had not deprived him of the leisure and power to carry out his intentions more fully, he would probably have done much towards regulating and consolidating the

English government in Ireland. That the design with which he entered that island was not merely to reduce to his obedience one or two refractory barons, is evident from the fact that he took with him, not only an army of soldiers, but a number of learned advisers, who are termed, in a document compiled under the following reign, "discreet men, skilled in the laws," and that before his departure he had effected, with their assistance, two reforms of some importance in the civil condition of the English settlements. The first of these introduced more generally, and enforced more rigidly, the observance of the English laws, which had been too often held in abeyance through the enormous power of the great feudatories who set all law at defiance. The second great measure of reform, was in some degree, necessary for rendering the first effective. King John made a division of the English Pale into twelve counties, with sheriffs, and other officers, as in England. These counties were Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Orgial (now Lowth), Catherlow (Carlow), Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, and Tipperary. The number was subsequently increased, as the English settlements and laws were gradually extended over other parts of the island, and, before the end of the century of which we are now speaking, we find mention of sheriffs of Connaught and of Roscommon, the latter a part of Connaught that appears then to have been formed into a distinct county. Another important innovation was effected by the English monarch at this time; the first regular coinage in Ireland of sterling money, for circulation in Ireland, and which, at the same time, was made current also in England, dates from the year 1210, and was struck by direction of king John.

When the king left Ireland, he appointed as his deputy, with the title of lord justice, John de Grey, bishop of Norwich, who appears to have governed the English Pale vigorously and successfully. Though the island remained far from tranquil, its disorders were chiefly confined to the parts most remote from the English territory, while the Irish were compelled to be satisfied by the accidental vengeance which fell from time to time upon their enemies, by the fury of the elements, or, in which they believed more firmly, by the anger of the saints. A remarkable instance of this supposed agency has found a place in nearly all the native

chronicles. After the flight of the De Lacys, Richard Tuite was one of the most powerful of the English barons in Meath, and he appears to have been one of the most energetic supporters of the measures of the bishop of Norwich. The latter determined to erect a castle at Athlone, as a curb upon the Irish of Connaught and Munster in that direction, and, as it was said, with the intention of giving further strength to the English power in Meath by making this place, alternately with Dublin, the seat of his government. Accordingly he marched thither, accompanied with Richard Tuite, at the head of an army raised in Leinster and Meath, and immediately built a bridge over the Shannon, and commenced his castle on the site of a fort which had been raised in 1129 by king Turlough O'Connor, and near the sanctuaries of St. Peter and St. Kieran, into the precincts of which the outworks of the castle were carried. When the work was nearly finished, one of the towers, owing to some defect in the workmanship, fell, and killed Richard Tuite, with his chaplain, and seven other Englishmen, who happened to be standing under it. The bishop, John de Grey, a man of great abilities as a statesman, was one of king John's favourite ministers; and it was the attempt of the latter to place him in the see of Canterbury that provoked the great quarrel with the papal court, in consequence of which he was excommunicated by the pope. The Irish firmly believed that the disastrous accident at Athlone castle was the consequence of this excommunication, and of the anger of the two saints whose sanctuaries had been trespassed upon.

It was this attempt to suppress the rebellious spirit that existed in the west of Meath, combined with disputes arising out of the English settlements in those parts of Connaught ceded to the English crown, which aroused the hostilities that gave the chief trouble to the government at Dublin. King Cathal Croivdearg's submissive behaviour in face of the English king, had disgusted a part of his people, and was the signal for new treasons among the descendants of Roderic O'Connor. The story of these petty wars, as it is recorded in the Irish chronicles, (our only authority in this case) is confused. Some of the insurgents, under the rebellious O'Connors, crossed the Shannon from the English territory in Meath, and plundered the county of Roscommon at the time when the English were erecting the castle of Ath-

lone; but they were attacked and defeated by Hugh, the son of Cathal Croivdearg, and obliged to repossess the Shannon with the loss of their booty. Tranquillity appears to have been restored for a moment by the intermediation of the English lord justice, who was still at Athlone. The bishop of Norwich subsequently marched with his army into Ulster, and early in 1211 erected a strong castle at Clones (in Monaghan) as a check upon O'Neill of Tyrone. While engaged on this work, a party of the English, engaged in a predatory excursion, were defeated by O'Neill, and many of them slain, among whom was an English knight of one of the great families of the early invaders, Meiler, the son of Robert fitz Henry. The king of Connaught remained faithful to his league with the English, and by their direction sent an army to the shores of Lough Erne, where they built a castle at Cael-uisge, which was placed under a chief of English blood, who had taken the name of Gilbert mac Costello, as a further curb upon the independent Irish of the north.

While the English and their allies were thus occupied in Ulster, the borders of Connaught and Meath were again disturbed by the turbulence of the Irish, who, under Cormac, the son of Art O'Melachlin, expelled the English from the territory of Delvin (the modern King's County), and slew their leader. This must have been late in the year 1211; and at the end of winter, probably after the army of Connaught had dispersed, and when the English army had returned to Dublin, the Irish of Ulster again rose, burnt Drumquin, and marched against the English castles. That of Cael-uisge was taken by an Irish chief named O'Hegny, who burnt it, after having slain its keeper, Gilbert mac Costello. Hugh O'Neill himself marched against the castle of Clones, which also was taken and burnt. The English met with no better fortune in their attempt to resist the invasion of Delvin by Cormac O'Melachlin, who, being joined by one of the rebellious O'Connors from the neighbouring province, defeated the English with considerable loss. The king of Connaught was now called upon to take part with the English, and he readily joined against his own rebellious subjects. In 1213, Cormac was defeated by the English, who drove him out of Delvin, and built several castles to defend that district against the Irish; but the latter recovered it again before the end of the year.

In the course of these hostilities a rather romantic incident occurred, which furnishes a remarkable illustration of the position of the bardic order in Irish society at this period. The chiefs of Tirconnel had long been in the habit of interfering in the troubles of the north of Connaught, and they appeared to have levied a tribute on the present county of Sligo. In 1213, as we learn from the annals of the Four Masters, O'Donnell of Tirconnel sent his steward, Finn O'Brollaghan, to collect this tribute, and Finn went first to Carbury of Drumcliff, and there with his company visited the house of the poet Murray O'Daly of Lissadill, a castle or house near the bay of Sligo. When the steward came into the presence of the poet, he treated him with the insolent bearing often assumed by upstarts of low birth, who are unadvisedly chosen to act as the representatives of great personages, which so enraged Murray O'Daly, that he seized a sharp axe which was standing near, and with one blow killed the insolent intruder. He then fled into Clanrickard, in Galway, to avoid O'Donnell's resentment. He there sought the protection of Richard de Burgh, the lord of this part of Galway, from whom also it is said to have derived its name. The poem which the bard addressed to Richard de Burgh on this occasion, and in which he calls himself O'Daly of Meath, is still preserved. In it he tells De Burgh that he was wont to frequent the courts of the English, and to drink wine from the hands of kings and knights, as well as at the tables of bishops and abbots. Unwilling to be trampled under foot by the race of Con (from whom the northern princes derived their descent), he had fled to one who, with his warriors clothed in mail, was able to protect him against the fury of the "king of Derry and Assaroe." The offence he had committed is represented as a mere trifle—the slaughter of a "plebeian." He calls upon the powerful baron he had chosen as his protector to show respect to the order of poets, who were never treated with severity by the chieftains, whose pride it should be to protect the weak against the strong. He next describes in flattering language the splendour of Richard de Burgh's house and the nobility of its inmates, and he terms him, in exaggerated language, the chief of the English, lord of Leinster, king of Connaught, and possessor of the forts of Cruachan, Tara, Mac Coisi's wall of stones, and other ancient palaces. In the conclusion he again invokes him as the powerful king of Connaught, the whole of which province, as

an earldom, was a few years afterwards confirmed to Richard de Burgh by king Henry III.

It appears, however, that the power of Richard de Burgh was not sufficient to protect the fugitive bard. O'Donnell raised an army, and marched through Connaught, probably favoured and assisted by some of the parties in the disorders which desolated that province, till he entered Galway, where he encamped at a place in the parish of Athenry, said to have been named from this circumstance Derrydonnell, or the oaks of Donnell, and began to plunder and burn the country around. De Burgh, unable to resist his formidable assailant, sent the poet into Thomond, and then, according to the Irish account, made his peace with O'Donnell on the best terms he could. The Irish annals term it a submission. O'Donnell next proceeded into Thomond, burning and ravaging without mercy, until the Irish prince of that district, Donough Cairbreach O'Brian, followed the example of the English chief of Clanrickard, and sent O'Daly to Limerick, where he was still followed by his persevering foe, who is represented as encamping at a place near that city, named from him Moneynonell. O'Daly again took flight, and thus, protected continually by the reverence with which everybody regarded the bardic character, he passed from one chief to another until he arrived at Dublin.

O'Donnell, finding that his victim had slipped from his grasp in the south, returned home, overrunning Connaught in his way, and then he sent to demand the fugitive from the government at Dublin. The Irish annals pretend that O'Donnell raised another army, with which he marched to Dublin, and laid siege to that city, until O'Daly was expelled. The latter fled into Scotland, where the character of the poet was still sacred; there he composed three poems in praise of his enemy O'Donnell, and the latter was so much pleased with his panegyrics, that he not only forgave him the feud, but he took him into his friendship, and gave him lands and possessions to induce him to return.

The disorders in Connaught at length reduced king Cathal Croivdearg to the humiliating necessity of making a direct application to king John for protection against his rebellious subjects; and that monarch, who seems to have been desirous of following the policy of his father in protecting and conciliating the great Irish chiefs, directed his

letters patent to the lord justice, Henry of London, archbishop of Dublin, who had succeeded John de Grey in the government in 1214, and other officers in Ireland, ordering them to protect and assist the king of Connaught to the utmost of their power, and to give ear to no unfavourable reports from his enemies. Other letters were at the same time addressed by the king to his deputy in Ireland, directing him to buy such a quantity of scarlets as should suffice to make robes to be presented to the king of Ireland and to others of the king's liegemen, natives of that kingdom. It has been suggested that the object of this gift was not only to conciliate the momentary good will of the Irish chiefs, but to habituate them gradually to the use of English apparel. From this time, during several years, the chief disorders recorded in the annals of the kingdom of Connaught, are a few retaliatory murders each successive year.

In Ulster, the disorders among the Irish, as well as their hostility to the English, had taken a more formidable character. The old rivalry between the people of Tyrone and those of Tirconnell had broke out again in 1212, and led to a battle, in which a plundering party of the Kinel-Connell were defeated and deprived of their booty. The feud, however, continued, and led, early in 1213, to an attack upon Derry, which was plundered. In another attack on this place by some of the Irish clans, the great prior of the abbey church was slain. On the part of the English, the war in this district of the island was carried on almost entirely by the garrisons of the frontier castles and towns. Under this same year (1213) the annals inform us, as a disastrous occurrence, that in the north of Ulster the English, under Thomas mac Ughtry, built a castle at Coleraine, and that all the cemeteries and buildings of the town,

with the exception only of the church, were taken down to supply materials. At the same time Hugh O'Neill had invaded the southern part of Ulster, committing great havoc upon the English possessions, until he arrived at the town of Carlingford, which he burnt to the ground, after having massacred its inhabitants. Derry was again the scene of partial depredations in 1214. In Munster the English, taking advantage of the feuds among the native Irish, were gaining ground against the O'Briens in the north and the Mac Carthys in the south, and were covering Thomond and Desmond with their castles. The annals mention no less than fifteen castles erected by the English in the counties of Kerry and Cork during the year 1215. The only remarkable event recorded under the year 1216 in the Irish annals, is the erection of a castle at Killaloe in the county of Clare by Geoffrey de Marisco, who had been left to govern Ireland during the troubles which now desolated England, and rendered it necessary to call over to the assistance of king John some of the ablest of his Irish barons and as much of the military force of Ireland as could be spared. The comparative tranquillity which now prevailed there contrasted strangely with the discord that reigned in England.

King John died on the 19th of October of the year last quoted. We may judge of the inaccuracy of the early Irish chroniclers, or, perhaps, in this case of the wild rumours which were spread abroad relating to this monarch's death, from the different statements which these writers have recorded. From the Annals of Kilronan we learn that "John, king of England was deposed by the English this year, and died of a fit." The Annals of Clonmacnoise state that he was poisoned by drinking of a cup of ale, wherein there was a toad pricked by a broach.

CHAPTER II.

ACCESSION OF HENRY III; CONTINUED TROUBLES IN THE KINGDOM OF CONNAUGHT.



THE accession of Henry III. to the throne of England was followed by an attempt at the revival of some of the old feuds among the English settlers in Ireland which had been suppressed by his father. No sooner had the young king been proclaimed, than the Anglo-Irish lords addressed a memorial to him, setting forth their grievances, and petitioning for reforms. Among the former, were the great severities exercised by the late king towards many of the powerful Anglo-Irish chiefs, and the confiscation of their estates. And they marked their conviction of the evils arising from a constant change of governors, who were often persons individually inferior in rank and power to themselves, by a pressing request, (founded on a sentiment which had been held by previous monarchs, that Ireland ought to be governed by a member of the royal house of England, who should be permanently resident in the island,) is that the queen dowager, or the king's brother, should be sent to reside amongst them. The Anglo-Irish interests, on this occasion, were likely to receive attention, for William Mareschal, earl of Pembroke, and himself lord of Leinster, had been appointed regent of the kingdom during Henry's minority. The reply to the latter request was, however, evasive; while the king was made to declare, in answer to the grievance just mentioned, his pleasure that all resentments which might have existed between his late father and certain of his nobles should be entirely abolished and forgotten. In pursuance of this policy, the De Lacys were again taken into favour, and a letter was written by the king to Hugh de Lacy, intreating him to forget all former animosities, and assuring him of his future favour and protection.

At the same time Henry, having in a grand council held at Bristol, renewed and ratified the Great Charter of his father for all his subjects, a duplicate was transmitted

to Ireland, with such trifling alterations, relating to certain forms of administering justice, to proceedings for the advowsons of churches, and to the Irish custom of dowers, which were necessary to accommodate the laws of the English settlers to the customs and usages of that country. The native Irish were still excluded from all participation in the English laws; and although individual instances occur in which Irish chiefs, on their direct application to the crown, obtained a grant of such participation as a special boon, the Anglo-Irish barons continued, long subsequent to this period, to oppose most pertinaciously all attempts to introduce the English laws among the Irish.

At the time of Henry's accession to the throne, Geoffrey de Marisco, as we have already stated, governed Ireland as its lord justice. Soon afterwards, Henry of London, the archbishop of Dublin, was sent back to Ireland to assume his pastoral charge, and to act as coadjutor with the lord justice. This prelate appears to have possessed in a high degree the talents necessary for a statesman as well as an ecclesiastic, and during the first years of the reign of the new monarch, Ireland remained unusually tranquil.* The first spark was again set to the flame of civil discord by the English barons. William Mareschal, earl of Pembroke and regent of the kingdom, died in 1219, and no sooner had his son William succeeded to his titles and possessions, than the De Lacys, who had recovered their former turbulence and ambition along with their estates, laid claim to some of his lands. At first the claimant

* The archbishop appears to have been no favourite of the Irish, who in after times gave him the *sobriquet* of "burn-bill," in explanation of which a story was preserved traditionally, though it has probably small claims to credibility, that on one occasion he summoned the tenants of his see to meet him and produce the instruments by which they held their lands, and when he had got them into his hands, under pretence of examining their titles, he threw them instantly into the fire. The tenants raised a violent tumult, wounded some of the archbishop's domestics, and compelled him to seek safety in flight. He was obliged subsequently to appease his tenants by giving them new confirmations of their old tenures.

appears to have had recourse to legal proceedings, which were carried on at that time with remarkable slowness. The Irish annals announce that in the year of the earl of Pembroke's death, 1219, Walter de Lacy and another factious baron, Richard de Burgh, returned to Ireland. The possessions of de Burgh lay in Munster and the south of Connaught, in which latter province symptoms of new disorders began to show themselves. Richard de Burgh, whose kinsman Hugh de Burgh was now in the height of his power, had obtained a grant from the English crown of the whole of the kingdom of Connaught after the death of Cathal Croivdearg, and he now probably came to take steps for ensuring his future possession. Various pretenders of the family of O'Connor were also preparing to put forward their conflicting claims; and it is recorded that in the year following, one of these, Dermot son of Roderic O'Connor, had collected a fleet in the Hebrides, with which he was on his way to Ireland to raise the standard of rebellion against king Cathal, when he was defeated and slain by the English under Thomas mac Ughtry. This same year, Walter de Lacy, with the English of Meath, marched to the banks of the Shannon, and began to build a castle at Lanesborough, between Longford and Roscommon. But the king of Connaught approached with a formidable army, and as he crossed the Shannon to attack them, the English retreated, and left their castle unfinished. The Irish levelled the castle to the ground, and then returned into Connaught, without committing any further injury.

It was in 1221, according to the Irish annals, that Hugh de Lacy, finding probably that the law was not likely to be in favour of his claims, determined to have recourse to the sword, and proceeded to Ireland, "contrary to the command of the king of England." He began by entering into a close alliance with the turbulent king of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill, who, ever ready to seize an occasion of molesting the English, joined De Lacy and the English of Meath in a sudden and devastating invasion of the earl of Pembroke's possessions in Leinster. In their way they took Coleraine, and dismantled its castle. William Mareschal, the young earl of Pembroke, who had also repaired to Ireland to defend his rights with the sword, retaliated by the invasion of Meath, and laid siege to Trim. Meath and Leinster were thus alternately laid waste, until, wearied by their mutual losses, the

two barons agreed to suspend hostilities and become reconciled. Nearly at the same time the repose of Munster was again disturbed by hostilities between the English and the Irish, until O'Brian prince of Thomond, as a measure of self-defence, agreed to receive a part of that territory as a grant from the English crown, for which he was to pay a yearly rent of one hundred and thirty marks. For a year or two after the reconciliation between the earl of Pembroke and the De Lacys, the island again enjoyed tranquillity, with the exception of a desolating invasion of Connaught in 1223 by O'Donnell of Tirconnell, whom we have already seen claiming tribute from the northern district of Cathal's kingdom.

In the spring of the year 1224, as the Irish annals informs us, "a heavy and awful shower" fell in various districts of Connaught, and they considered it as an ominous sign of the disasters which were hanging over the kingdom of the O'Connors. Cathal Croivdearg was now aged, and, after having commenced the foundation of a new monastery of Franciscans at Athlone, he felt death approaching, and retired to his older foundation of Knockmoy, or the abbey of the hill of Victory, which he had built on the spot where more than forty years before he had defeated a portion of the forces of John de Courcy. He there died on the 28th of May, having first assumed the habit of a cistercian monk, by which the monkish chroniclers believed, to use their own expression, that the contender in so many earthly battles at length "overcame the world and the devil." The same historians remembered his reign with pride, as being the one in which the payment of tythes was first exacted in Ireland. His countrymen cherished his memory as that of the best Irishman for gentility and honour since the golden days of Brian Boru. The description of this monarch by king John's Flemish soldier has been given in a former chapter. The Irish further give him the character of having been the grand destroyer of the rebels and enemies of Ireland, and the greatest reliver of the wants of the clergy, the poor, and the destitute. His name is still remembered in a number of local legends in Connaught, some of which represent him as the illegitimate son of king Turlough, and they all offer explanations, more or less extraordinary, of his title of Cathal Croivdearg, or Cathal with the red hand.

Hugh O'Connor, Cathal's son, who had

in his hands the hostages of the kingdom, which his father had delivered into his keeping as the next heir to his throne, immediately assumed the sovereignty, and exercised it without delay, by giving judgment on two criminals accused of robbery and rape, the former of whom he ordered to lose his hand, the other his eyes. This appears to have been the royal prerogative which afforded the most evident proof of the possession of the sovereignty, and it is particularly specified by the chroniclers in the case of Hugh, the son of Cathal Croivdearg; they unite in expressing their conviction of his right to and worthiness of the throne of Connaught. But his uncles, Turlough and Hugh, the sons of Roderic O'Connor, who had already been conspiring against his father, now came forwards openly, and Hugh O'Neill of Tyrone, ever ready to draw his sword in the quarrels of his neighbours, gave his assistance to these pretenders. Their party thus became so powerful, that the people of Connaught, under O'Neill's influence, proceeded to an election, and chose Turlough O'Connor for their king. The chronicles inform us that, in consequence of the civil war which followed Cathal Croivdearg's death, joined with the inclemency of the weather, the corn throughout Connaught remained unreaped until St. Brigid's day, the first of February of the year following, which was the time for ploughing.

According to the annalists, it was towards the summer of 1225 when O'Neill, with his army from the north, entered Connaught, marching to the country of the Siol-Murray, the clan which is said to have taken the lead in the conspiracy against king Hugh, and scarcely making a halt until he came to the wood of Athlone, on the borders of the English territory, where he encamped for the purpose of plundering the surrounding country, and obtained possession of the treasure of the late king, which had been kept at Lough Nen. King Hugh had retreated before the forces of O'Neill, and, unable to offer any serious resistance to the ambition of his rivals, he sought refuge in the castle of Athlone, where the English deputy, who was at this time William earl of Pembroke, appears to have assembled his council, no doubt in full anticipation of the events which were now in progress, and Hugh met with the most favourable reception when he laid his wrongs before the English barons.

The position of the kingdom of Connaught

was further complicated at this moment by the arrival of a mandate from the English monarch, directing the lord justice to seize into his hands the whole kingdom of Connaught, stated to have been forfeited by O'Connor, and to deliver it to Richard de Burgh, who had received the prospective grant of it several years before. The earl of Pembroke and his council thought probably that it was more advisable, under the circumstances, to espouse the cause of king Hugh, and an army was assembled at Athlone, skirmishing parties of which immediately crossed the border into Connaught, and plundered the clans which had given support to Hugh's enemies. The districts more immediately exposed to their depredations were soon deserted by their inhabitants, who drove away their cattle into the interior, and left the sons of Roderic O'Connor with a small body of troops, which could do little more than retreat gradually before their opponents.

This retreat was hastened by the defection of some of the Irish clans, who now began to desert from the sons of Roderic to the son of Cathal, who, with his English allies, advanced to Meelick, in the county of Mayo, where they remained three days plundering the district of Leyney, whose chief had joined the standard of the other party, and who at the end of the three days devastation of his territory made his submission to king Hugh, and so preserved the small amount of property which still remained untouched. The greater number of the clans of this part of Connaught who had conspired against king Hugh, had carried away all their property into the Tuathas and the district of the Siol-Murray, as a place of greater safety, from the difficulties which beset the approaches to it. But Hugh O'Connor, who was intimately acquainted with the secret passes, led his English allies by a route which was previously unknown to them, and passing through the wood of Gatlaigh unperceived by their enemies, and without experiencing the slightest opposition, they fell upon the district of Coolcarney, in Mayo, which they plundered in the most cruel manner, and slaughtered the inhabitants without mercy. A great part of those who escaped the sword were drowned in the river Moy in their flight, and the disaster was so great that the Irish annalists inform us that the baskets of the fishing-weirs along the river were found full of drowned children.

The English of Munster, hearing of the

havoc made by the English army in Mayo and Roscommon, and of the immense plunder they had collected, waited for no orders, but joining with the Irish chiefs of Desmond and Thomond, threw themselves upon the southern districts of Connaught, slew all the inhabitants who fell into their hands, and committed their houses and villages to the flames. "Woeful," say the Irish chroniclers, "was the misfortune which God permitted to fall upon the best province of Ireland at that time! for no man spared his neighbour, but he took advantage of his weakness to plunder him. Women and children, young lords and mighty men as well as feeble men, perished of cold and famine."

O'Neill appears to have returned into his own territory, to secure the plunder he had collected, and the sons of Roderic O'Connor, no longer able to contend with the overwhelming force which had now invaded Connaught, determined to separate, and thus avoid the storm until the son of Cathal should have dismissed the English from his service. To secure their property against the rapacity of their enemies, and to conceal their real intentions, it was agreed that some of their chieftains, especially Hugh O'Flaherty, powerful lord of west Connaught, whose district lay round Lough Corrib, should make their submission. These chiefs went to king Hugh at Mayo, and accompanied him to Kilmaine, where the three English armies met, and, joined with the Irish forces, are said to have been so numerous that they covered the whole cantred. The submission of the chiefs was accepted, and they promised to join Hugh O'Connor in expelling his rivals from the kingdom; and then Hugh and the English proceeded to Tuam, where he sent home the English of Leinster and Desmond who had entered Connaught from the south. The hollowness of this reconciliation was shown in a multitude of trifling incidents; and when some of the chiefs whose submission had been taken, and who had concealed their property in the district of Tirawley to shelter it from the depredations of the English, went to carry it away, they could not resist the temptation to plunder the English barony of Costello in their way.

King Hugh still entertained suspicions of the fidelity of Hugh O'Flaherty, who had been the great supporter of the sons of Roderic O'Connor, some of whom he was now sheltering; and with the lord justice and the English army which still remained

with him, he marched to Lough Corrib, and compelled him to deliver into his hands the islands in the lake, and the boats which communicated with the shores. The main body of the English army then returned home, escorted through his kingdom by the monarch whom they had contributed so powerfully in restoring to his throne.

The English had hardly turned their backs, when the sons of Roderic O'Connor were again in arms, and they were not only supported by O'Flaherty, but the other sons of Cathal Croivdearg joined in the revolt. King Hugh sent a messenger without delay to recall the English army, a division of which returned willingly, knowing that it was but an occasion for collecting new spoils. Hugh O'Connor, who was residing in the plain of Cruachan, or Croghan, as soon as he was reinforced by the arrival of the English, marched towards the west to meet his enemies before they were united, and sent his brother Feidhim, with a considerable body of the less experienced English soldiers, to plunder the possessions of Owen O'Heyne, one of the steadiest partizans of his rivals. These took up their lodgings at night in the town of Ardrahen in Galway, which they had seized that day with the intention of collecting thither the plunder of O'Heyne's district on the morrow. But O'Flaherty, and other chiefs, who were on their way to join the sons of Roderic, hearing of the danger of their ally, O'Heyne, made a hasty march during the night, and arrived at Ardrahen early in the morning. O'Flaherty separated his forces into two divisions, sending one to attack the English in the town, while with the larger division he awaited outside to destroy them in their flight. The attack on the town was successful, for the English appear to have been taken by surprise, while they were scattered about, and their commander was killed. But when O'Flaherty attacked them, in their retreat from Ardrahen, he was defeated with the loss of many of his bravest men, and this check seems to have discouraged the Irish chief to such a degree, that when he was joined by the sons of Roderic next day, they retreated before king Hugh and his English, without an attempt at opposition. Most of the smaller chiefs who had joined in the revolt now deserted, and the sons of Roderic, afraid to stay any longer in Connaught, fled, with some of their friends, to Tyrone, and sought shelter with their old friend, Hugh O'Neill, who had not had time

or inclination to march to their assistance while they remained in arms. Hugh O'Connor had little left to do beyond following O'Flaherty and some other Irish chiefs who had risen with him, who, soon reduced to obedience, were allowed eventually to make terms of peace with the conqueror. "This," says the Irish annalist, "was a necessary tranquillity, for there was not a church or territory in Connaught at that time which had not been plundered and desolated." To add to the calamities of this devoted kingdom, a dreadful pestilence followed, which ravaged it from one end to the other, leaving some of its largest towns without a single inhabitant.

Thus, before the conclusion of the year 1225, Ireland was again restored to tranquillity, and the annalists are left to record nothing but a few murders and robberies.

The friendship between Hugh mac Cathal and his English allies was not, however, of long duration; for each party suspected the honesty and fidelity of the other, as each was conscious that the alliance was one of temporary interests, on one side a measure of necessity, on the other a cloak for ulterior designs. It is said that the king of Connaught, already jealous of the English influence, was further provoked by the exorbitant demands which they made in return for the services they had rendered him, and it appears that he was at least suspected of meditating a new league against the English, in order to relieve himself from his obligations. Our only authority for these events are the Irish annals, and here again they are somewhat confused, but it appears that the English lord justice determined to get king Hugh into his power by an act of treachery. His son and daughter had been taken, by force (as it is stated), and carried as hostages to Dublin, with hostages of the principal families of Connaught, and then he was himself invited to attend the English court. On his arrival there he was treated as a criminal, and various charges having been declared against him, an order appears to have been made in all the due forms of law for his arrest. It was probably a first step in asserting the sovereignty of the English crown over the province of Connaught. But one of the great English barons, called in the annals of the Four Masters William Mareschal, no doubt the young earl of Pembroke, with a noble love of justice that contrasts strongly with the reckless ferocity of many

of his fellows, stood forward as the king's friend on this occasion, and suddenly, in the very middle of the court, surrounded him with his soldiers, and carried him in safety to the borders of Connaught, where he restored him to liberty.*

The king of Connaught, thus released from the snare into which he had unwarily fallen, repaired one act of treachery by another. He affected a desire to reconcile himself with the English deputy, or lord justice, Geoffrey de Marisco, and proposed that a conference should be held at Athlone to treat on subjects in dispute between them. The lord justice consented, and sent his son, William de Marisco, to Athlone, to hold his court there. Accordingly, about a week after his escape from Dublin, king Hugh came with an army to a slough or lake called Lathach Caichtubil, or the slough of Caichtubil, which then lay on the west side of Athlone; and he crossed with a few of his chiefs, to meet on the opposite side William de Marisco, who came thither with an attendance of only eight horsemen, one of whom was the constable of Athlone castle. The moment they met, the king, whose escort appears to have been far more numerous than that of William de Marisco, suddenly attacked the latter and dispersed them. William de Marisco and some others were taken prisoners, and the constable of Athlone was slain. Having sent his captives to a place of safety, Hugh hurried with his men to Athlone, plundered the market, and burnt the town, but left the castle, and returned to Connaught. The only advantage which the king of Connaught derived from this exploit, was the recovery of his son and daughter and the other Irish hostages, whom Geoffrey de Marisco agreed to surrender in exchange for his son.

These events are placed by most of the Irish chronicles in the year 1226.† They furnished a new occasion for the interference of the English in the internal affairs of Connaught, and the English government turned from the man it had established on the throne, and set up in opposition to him his old rivals, the two sons of Roderic O'Connor. Richard de Burgh, accompanied by Hugh, one of the sons of Roderic, marched from

* The earl of Pembroke had probably been his surety when the king of Connaught repaired to Dublin.

† The annals of the Four Masters place them in 1227. Some confusion arises in the earlier part of the history from a different series of dates in different chronicles.

Clanrickard through the heart of Connaught to the north, burning and plundering as usual on their way, and taking hostages for the obedience of the chiefs. At the same time, Geoffrey de Marisco, with the army of Meath, conducted Turlough, the other son of Roderic, into Roscommon, where they built a castle at Rindown, a peninsula on Lough Ree. King Hugh had fled before the combined invasion and insurrection, and sought shelter in Tirconnell; but, encouraged by the assistance of the O'Donnell who ruled that district, or perhaps invited by the promises of some of his own clans, he returned privately with his brother Feidlim or Felim, and his wife and children, to the north of Connaught, and entered the Curlew mountains. One of his servants here basely deserted him, and carried intelligence of his movements to his enemies; and Turlough and the English of Meath came upon him suddenly, and scattered his small party. Hugh, with his children and his brother Feidlim, escaped, but his wife fell into the hands of the assailants, and was delivered up to Geoffrey de Marisco as a hostage. Turlough and his allies then marched to the west of Connaught, and plundered the clans in that district until they submitted and gave hostages for obedience. Before the lord justice returned to Dublin, he erected a castle at Athleague, or Ballyleague, on the Shannon.

The deposed king of Connaught, Hugh, son of Cathal, satisfied that his cause was hopeless as long as he resisted the Anglo-Irish government, made his submission to Geoffrey de Marisco early the next year, 1227, and was thereupon restored to his kingdom of Connaught. The advantages he looked to obtain by this act of humiliation were, however, of short duration, for, being obliged to repair to Dublin and make his submission in person, he met his death in a manner totally unworthy of his rank and former actions. According to the most probable account, he was lodged in the house of an Englishman, whose wife, according to the custom of those times, prepared a bath for him and tended upon him with the courteous assiduity which the rank of her guest demanded. The king, with a gallantry which also was characteristic of the age, expressed his gratitude for her attentions by kissing his hostess. The husband, perhaps suspicious of his wife's fidelity, and watching her conduct, happened to be a witness of this proceeding; his jealousy was suddenly roused, and rushing into the apartment, he slew the

unarmed chief with the first weapon that came to hand. The English deputy made the only atonement in his power for the death of Hugh mac Cathal, by hanging the man who killed him.

This unexpected event had no sooner opened the accession to the throne of Connaught to the sons of Roderic O'Connor, Turlough and Hugh, than they also disputed the possession of the prize now that it was within their reach, and a large portion of the kingdom they claimed was again laid desolate with all the horrors of civil war. This new desolation is described by the native chroniclers as exceeding anything that had been seen before, and it was followed by a famine which carried off multitudes of the inhabitants. The two sons of Roderic, each on his own side, "plundered churches and territories; they drove the clergy and learned men into foreign and remote countries, and many of them perished of cold and hunger." Such is the touching lamentation of the native annalists.

In the midst of these events, on the 10th of March, 1227, Geoffrey de Marisco was recalled from the government, and Richard de Burgh was appointed deputy in his place, the man of all others most interested in the troubles of Connaught. For some reason or other, with which we are not distinctly acquainted, Richard de Burgh espoused the cause of the younger of the two brothers who were contending for the crown, and Hugh O'Connor, the son of Roderic, was accordingly placed on the throne. He was not long allowed to enjoy it in quiet, for, besides his brother Turlough, he found a rival in his nephew Feidlim, one of the sons of Cathal.

As we enter into these complicated feuds and hostilities, it becomes more and more difficult to unravel their secret causes amid the often conflicting entries of the insufficient records of the time. Two years had not elapsed, before the new king of Connaught incurred the displeasure of the English deputy, who had placed the crown on his head. It seems that the various clans of Connaught had promised to unite in expelling the English from those parts of the kingdom in which they had obtained a footing, and that by their persuasions he was induced to set the English deputy at defiance. Hugh himself, with the people of West Connaught, fell suddenly upon the possessions of the De Burghs in Clanrickard, and while they were plundering this

district, Donn Oge Mageraghty, who is represented as having been the principal instigator of this war, with the Siol-Murray and other clans of East Connaught, ravaged the lands of Mac Costello, and the English district of Hy-Many. Richard de Burgh, apparently well prepared for these events, had acted with provident deliberation, and he had no sooner heard of the commencement of hostilities, than he took with him Feidlim O'Connor, the son of Cathal Croivdearg, and marched with a formidable army into Galway, the possessions of the O'Flaherty's, where the chief strength of the sons of Roderic O'Connor lay. Thence he proceeded through Western Connaught towards the north, robbing, burning, and slaying, till he approached the Curlew mountains, which the English passed without loss. King Hugh and Donn Oge, who had formed a junction of their forces and made an ineffectual attempt to save their friends in Galway, appear to have retreated slowly before their enemies, or to have followed them closely and unobserved, resolving to avoid a battle in the hope that when the English had gone home with their booty, they would regain the ascendancy. It was the old policy of the Irish in their wars. But, when they arrived in the neighbourhood of the Curlew mountains, after the English had been allowed to pass them unmolested, the eagerness of Donn Oge drew on a general engagement, in which the Irish army was defeated and dispersed, and Donn Oge himself was slain. The king escaped with difficulty from the field, and fled to Tyrone, where he found protection at the court of the old and unchanging enemy of the English, Hugh O'Neill. Immediately after the battle, Richard de Burgh proclaimed Feidlim, son of Cathal Croivdearg, king of Connaught, and then marched home with his spoils.

All hope which the deposed chieftain might have built on the protection of his northern friends, was destroyed not long after his arrival in Tyrone by the death of Hugh O'Neill, the active and bitter foe of the English settlers, of whom the chroniclers, in recording his death, say that it was never expected that he of all others would expire peacefully in his bed. Feuds without number seem to have followed the loss of this hero of the north; he was succeeded by an O'Lochlin, under whom the old hostilities between Tírconnell and Tyrone were soon revived.

In the year following O'Neill's death, Rich-

ard de Burgh's policy towards Connaught changed again, and before the end of 1230, king Feidlim, who had been treacherously seized at Meelick, was a prisoner in the hands of the lord justice. The cause usually stated for this act, was the refusal of Feidlim to consent to the humiliating conditions which Richard de Burgh insisted on imposing upon him. Another of the O'Connors, Connor, son of the deposed Hugh, who had been in captivity in the English Pale, made his escape, raised the people of Connaught, and invaded the district of the Tuathas, but was defeated by the people of that country, and slain in the battle with several other chieftains of Connaught. An incident is mentioned with respect to this battle, which illustrates curiously the temper of the age. A rumour is said to have been spread abroad that the man who killed Connor O'Connor, carried an axe with a white handle, upon which all the people of the Tuathas who were present, to screen the slayer from the vengeance of Connor O'Connor's kinsmen, whitened the handles of their battle-axes. Soon after this event, Richard de Burgh restored Connor's father Hugh to the throne of Connaught.

After remaining in prison some months, Feidlim had the good fortune to make his escape in the course of the year 1232, and collecting a considerable body of adherents, he was immediately enabled to make head against his enemies. The Irish of Connaught crowded to his standard, in their hatred of the English misrule of Richard de Burgh, and in an obstinate battle with king Hugh and his English supporters, he gained a decisive victory, slaying in the battle Hugh O'Connor, with many Irish and English chiefs. Feidlim resumed the sovereign power over the ancient kingdom of Connaught; and fortunately for his subjects, Richard de Burgh was at this moment, early in 1233, replaced in the English government of Ireland by Maurice fitz Gerald. Richard de Burgh was now left to war against Feidlim with no other powers than the formidable influence given him by his possessions in Clanrickard, and his old grant of the kingdom of Connaught, but Feidlim still dreaded his antagonist, and, having probably heard of the temporary disgrace of his powerful kinsman, Hubert de Burgh, in England, he determined to seek protection by a personal application to the English king. While Henry was deceived by information sent from his own barons in

Ireland, representing Feidlim as an inveterate enemy to his royal authority, who had stirred up all the Irish against the king of England, and invaded his lands with fire and sword, until his barons had marched against him with all their strength, and repressed his insolence, the Irish prince sent him a submissive letter, representing his own and his father's inviolable attachment to the English government, and complaining of the repeated injuries he had sustained from De Burgh, whom he accused of disloyalty, and he intreated permission to repair to England, to throw himself at the king's feet, and explain more particularly the various crimes of which Richard de Burgh had been guilty.

King Henry was not disinclined to listen to complaints against his barons, especially (at this moment) against a De Burgh, and he

returned a cautious, but not unfavourable answer. In his letter to the lord justice, Maurice fitz Gerald, dated on the 28th of May, 1233, he not only acknowledged Feidlim as his liegeman, which gave him a right of protection against the machinations of De Burgh, but he authorized him to capture from that baron the castle of Duleek and place it in the hands of the deputy, after which he was to receive a safe conduct to repair to his court in England. Feidlim did not immediately carry his intention of visiting the king of England into effect, but he had already gained his purpose, and he was allowed for a few months to rule over Connaught in peace.*

* The authority for this latter portion of Feidlim's history is the English historian Matthew Paris, with the documents on the English rolls.

CHAPTER III.

DEATH OF RICHARD EARL OF PEMBROKE; WARS WITH THE IRISH OF CONNAUGHT; IRELAND GRANTED TO PRINCE EDWARD; BATTLE OF DOWN.



LONG enduring feuds had grown up among the great lords of the English Pale, arising most frequently from conflicting claims to territory, and the individual ambition

which made them sometimes stand in each other's way, and, perhaps, in many cases, from the circumstance of their having taken opposite sides in the wars among the Irish. A system of favouritism now prevailed at the English court which embittered such feuds by using them for purposes of vengeance; and the Anglo-Irish barons were made to participate in a tragedy which occurred in Ireland at the time of which we are now speaking, and which caused a profound sensation throughout both islands.

We are now approaching that grand baronial contention in England in which were established most of the great principles of the constitution, and the family of the Mareschals was distinguished for its advocacy of the popular cause, and was therefore not in favour at court. William earl of Pembroke had, under the preceding

reign, been one of the twenty-five barons appointed to enforce the observance of Magna Charta, and, although he was distinguished by his loyalty to king Henry, his younger brothers were equally remarkable for their opposition to the encroachments of the crown and the rapacity of the favourites. The eldest of these, Richard Mareschal, was universally popular, not only for his well-known principles, but for his chivalrous character, for he is described by his contemporaries as an incomparable knight,† noble equally in his valour and in his generosity. He had long been the enemy of Henry's favourite minister, Hubert de Burgh, and he joined willingly in the opposition to the still more obnoxious ministry of his successor in power, the foreign bishop of Winchester, who was his implacable enemy.

William earl of Pembroke died in 1231, leaving no children, and his brother Richard immediately repaired to the king, who was in Wales, to do homage for his inheritance. But the king refused to give him the earl-

† "Miles incomparabilis." Matth. Paris, ed. Watts, p. 387. In another place Matthew Paris calls him "militiæ flos temporum modernorum."

dom and possession he claimed, on the pretence that his brother's widow had been left in a state of pregnancy. This plea was, of course, not long of avail, and then Richard Mareschal was charged with treasonable practices, and ordered to quit the kingdom within fifteen days. Richard fled to Ireland, and there his brothers and the feudal tenantry, without hesitation, delivered up his castles and performed their homage to him for his principality of Leinster. He immediately raised an army, and, passing the channel, took possession of the castle of Pembroke, and prepared to enforce his claims by the sword. But the king and his ministers were alarmed at his bold conduct, and, fearing that the flame might spread, they waived their previous scruples, and invested him with the honours of the earldom of Pembroke, and with the hereditary office of earl marshal of England.

The reconciliation, however, was not sincere on either part, for the young earl of Pembroke was not only one of the first to join in the subsequent baronial confederacy against the unpopular minister, but he was one of those who stood most firmly to the cause. When many of the confederates had been gained over, and the league was crushed, he still held out almost singly, and, retiring to the borders of Wales and joining with the Welsh king, he sustained a protracted war against king Henry, and defeated every attempt to reduce him to obedience, and, while thus in open rebellion, his successes were hailed with popular rejoicing through almost every part of the kingdom. These occurrences took place in the year 1233.

At length, unable to take the chivalrous baron by force, the bishop of Winchester determined to employ treachery, and a deep plot was formed to draw him into Ireland. Letters under the king's seal, with the signature of the minister, were directed to Maurice fitz Gerald, then lord justice of Ireland, and to Hugh and Walter de Lacy, Richard de Burgh, and Geoffrey de Marisco, promising to share the earl of Pembroke's great Irish estates between them, if they should succeed in capturing him on his arrival in that island. The De Lacys had on a former occasion laid claim to some of these estates, and the king's offer was a tempting bribe to all the barons thus addressed. The soldiers who had been so long habituated to plundering the borders of Ulster and Connaught, were marched under the banners of their great lords into Leinster, and castle

after castle fell into their hands. To allure the earl into Ireland without the forces with which he was making so successful a resistance in Wales; the Irish barons caused intelligence to be sent over to him of the outrages which were committed on his Irish lands, combined with exaggerated reports of the numbers and fidelity of his own adherents, and the necessity of his hastening to place himself in person at their head. Deceived by such representations, the earl of Pembroke rashly sailed, accompanied with no more than fifteen knights, and landed on the Irish shores on the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, the 2nd of February, 1234. It seems evident, however, that the earl's tenantry resisted with courage; and that he found himself on his arrival at the head of a sufficient force to make it dangerous for his enemies to attempt openly to arrest him. To lead the young earl more surely to his destruction, Geoffrey de Marisco, who was one of those most deeply engaged in the plot, although he appears to have been one of the earl's feudatories, and who is stigmatized by Matthew Paris as a "faithless old man,"* went to him as soon as he had landed to make professions of his devotedness, and was immediately received as a confidential adviser. He flattered earl Richard by reminding him of the greatness of his family and the nobleness of his blood, and, pretending to sympathize with him on the great injuries he had received, he spoke of his power and his resources, and of the popularity of his cause, and advised him to take revenge by attacking the king's possessions in Ireland.

Earl Richard soon found himself at the head of an army, and, acting upon the counsel of his perfidious adviser, not only recovered a great part of his own possessions, but invaded those of his enemies, and, after a siege of only four days, made himself master of Limerick, and enlisted the citizens in his favour. His cause was one that was generally popular among the inhabitants of the corporate towns, the staunch advocates of the national liberties during the middle ages. Every thing seemed now to yield before his arms, and he published a declaration of his grievances, and of the objects he had in view. The barons pretended to be alarmed at his successes, expressed their fears that the king's authority in Ireland would be endangered, and demanded a truce, proposing a

* "Homo ejus ligius, senex infidelis." Matth. Paris, ed. Watts, p. 397.

meeting with an equal number of men on each side to discuss the terms of an amicable arrangement. Geoffrey de Marisco now stepped forwards again to offer his treacherous counsels. He intimidated his own knowledge of the faithless character of his enemies, and told the earl he was convinced that their only object in desiring a cessation of arms was to throw him off his guard, in order that, having dismissed his army, they might fall upon him when he was unprepared for resistance. Earl Richard, thus deluded, haughtily refused any truce or cessation of arms, but consented to the meeting.

The place appointed for this conference was that celebrated Curragh of Kildare, memorable as the scene of so many remarkable events in Irish history. The earl of Pembroke came to this place on Saturday the 1st of April, 1234, with a company of about a hundred knights, and he placed so much faith in Geoffrey de Marisco, that he had allowed them to be nearly all appointed by him. The De Lacys, De Burgh, and their associates, brought a hundred and forty knights, and we are assured that these had been selected from among those of the soldiery in Ireland who were least likely to hesitate at any deed of blood and treason, and that their foot attendants were many of them Irish of the very worst class. Thus the numbers were not so unequal, but that the known gallantry of earl Richard might easily turn the balance of arms in his favour. The conference was not intended to be long; it appears that some knights templars acted as mediators, a few treacherous offers were proudly rejected, and then the barons declared that they were come there to treat or to fight, and that as their pacific offers were rejected, they would at once put the quarrel to the decision of the sword. The earl of Pembroke, without hesitation, prepared for the combat. It was at this moment that Geoffrey de Marisco threw off the mask which had hitherto concealed his designs. He rode up to the earl, recommending him to surrender himself to the mercy of the barons, told him that, as Walter de Lacy had married his sister, he could not fight against his own kinsman, and then rode off with fourscore of the earl's knights, who had previously received bribes to desert their lord whenever he should give them the signal.

The earl saw that he was betrayed, and prepared to meet his death like a brave man. His company was reduced to little more than

the fifteen faithful knights who had followed him from Wales. He had still the chance of flight, but, with the chivalrous character for which he was distinguished, he declared that he would never disgrace his family by turning his back upon an enemy. But he turned affectionately to bid adieu to his younger brother Walter, a handsome youth,* who had accompanied him to the meeting, and ordered some of his servants to carry him to a castle in the neighbourhood, since he was of too tender years to be sacrificed in such an encounter.

The barons who had confederated against the earl took no part in the combat, but stood aloof while their followers did the work for which they had been hired. These all crowded round the earl, whose person was their chief aim. For a long time he kept them at bay, striking down all who dared to attack him. His assailants are represented as consisting, in great part, of a mob of the lowest soldiers, armed with axes, prongs, and other vulgar weapons, with which they tried to throw him from his horse, but which made little impression upon his armour. At length they directed all their attacks against his horse, which was soon thrown down and killed. The earl, now wearied with the combat, for the struggle had lasted from the first hour of the day to the eleventh,† and overwhelmed by the footmen, fell helpless on his face, and was held in that position by some of his assailants, while others lifted up the coat of mail which protected the lower part of his back, and one of them, who was armed with an anelace, or long knife, thrust it up to the hilt in his body. The earl, not yet dead, was carried, by order of the barons, to a castle of his own, which had just been captured by the deputy, Maurice fitz Gerald, who appears not to have taken personally any share in this last tragic scene. There he languished until the sixteenth of April, when he expired in the midst of his enemies, with only a single youth of his own household to attend upon him in his last moments. He was buried in the oratory of the friars minors at Kilkenny.

The news of the earl's death served as a spark to the discontent which prevailed throughout England, and the popular indignation knew no bounds. An Irish agent, who had the indiscretion to boast of having

* "*Juvenem elegantissimum.*" *Matth. Paris.*

† "*Ab hora diei prima ad horam undecimam.*" *Matth. Paris.*

taken a part in the treacherous fray on the plain of Kildare, as he was passing through London, was instantly massacred by the mob. The general odium fell chiefly on the bishop of Winchester, and the weak king, in his alarm, sacrificed his minister as the only hope of appeasing the storm. The citizens of Dublin were only restrained from open rebellion by earnest promises of a speedy redress of public grievances. King Henry disavowed loudly all knowledge of the measures which had led to earl Richard's death, and lamented over the loss of a brave and noble subject; and when the instructions were brought to light, to which the king's seal had been attached in his own presence, he denied any knowledge of their nature, and asserted that the minister had obtained his consent under a false representation of what he was doing. In his terror at the threatening aspect of his subjects, he allowed the earl's brother, Gilbert, to be invested with his honours and estates, and with the office of earl marshal; while the barons, who had procured his brother's death, proceeded to divide his lands with rapacious violence, not only oppressing his tenantry, but quarrelling with each other. As the king soon relapsed into his former measures, earl Gilbert became a violent partizan of the cause of popular independence, and talked loud of revenging his brother, but he was soon afterwards reconciled to the king, and was so far taken into favour at court, that the Irish lords were themselves struck with terror, and the lord justice, Maurice fitz Gerald, dreading the consequences of his resentment, repaired in person to London, and sought the mediation of the king to reconcile him to the young earl. There, in presence of king Henry and his principal nobles, Fitz Gerald took a solemn oath that he was innocent of all participation or concurrence in the death of Richard earl of Pembroke; and, as a further measure of conciliation, to avert the dangerous feud which might have arisen between the two families, he founded a monastery with a convent of monks whose duty it was to offer up constant prayers for the soul of the murdered nobleman.

The reconciliation between the new earl and the king was of short duration, and the former was soon again known as one of the boldest champions of the popular cause. At length, in 1241, while attending one of those tournaments which were really but other names for meetings to conspire against the government which offended and

oppressed the country, and which had been publicly forbidden by the king, he was accidentally thrown from his horse and killed. The next heir was his brother Walter, who had the misfortune to have been with his brother Gilbert at the tournament, as well as with his brother Richard at the fatal meeting on the curragh of Kildare, and was further obnoxious to the court as one of the popular leaders. It was accordingly, with the greatest difficulty, and only by the intercession of some powerful advocates, that he obtained livery of his inheritance, which he did not live to enjoy long, for he died in the November of 1245. The only remaining brother, Anselm, succeeded him without opposition, but he died eighteen days after he had done homage for the earldom, childless, like his brothers, and in him the male line of the great family of the Mareschals earls of Pembroke became extinct. Thus a whole family, who had joined powerfully in hastening the march of constitutional liberty, were swept away from the stage before their efforts had been crowned by that grand insurrection which, from their youth, they seemed all destined to witness.

The barons in Ireland, who had enriched themselves with the spoils of their victim, earl Richard, taking advantage of the unsettled state of the government in England, entered into new hostilities against the Irish, and made an apparently unprovoked attack on Feidlim O'Connor. Their excuse is said to have been some backwardness in that prince in fulfilling the demands of the English lord justice and of the De Burghs of Clanrickard; but the various claimants to the crown of Connaught among the different branches of the royal family of the O'Connors, always afforded a ready pretence for an invasion by the English to support one party or the other. The whole force of the English in Ireland was now collected against this unfortunate province. The lord justice, Maurice fitz Gerald, commanded the expedition in person; and he was joined by Richard de Burgh, Hugh de Lacy, Walter de Riddlesford, who, as chief baron of Leinster, commanded the forces of that province, John de Cogan, with the English of Munster, and many of the smaller barons who had established themselves on different parts of the Irish territory. This formidable army crossed the Shannon at Athlone, and burnt Roscommon, and proceeded thence to Elphin, which they also burnt; and the lord justice having established his head quarters

at Ardcarne near Boyle, plundering parties were sent out who laid waste the country into the interior of the modern county of Antrim.

While the invaders were thus occupied, one of their Irish allies, Owen O'Heyne, had sufficient influence to induce them to espouse his private feud against O'Brien of Thomond, and, without giving any notice of their design, they suddenly returned towards the south, plundering everything in their way, and entering Munster unexpectedly, had ravaged part of the territory of O'Brien before he was in a condition to defend it. Feidlim O'Connor, who appears to have offered no resistance to the English in their northward march, followed closely at their heels as soon as he learnt that they were retreating from Connaught, and he now joined his forces with those of O'Brien, and harassed the English by continual attacks, in which the soldiers of Connaught distinguished themselves by their bravery. At length, drawn into a more regular battle, partly, as it would appear, by the rashness of O'Brien, the Irish were entirely defeated, the Connaught men, who had suffered least, making the best of their way home, while O'Brien next day made his submission to the English, and delivered his hostages.

The English army now returned into Connaught, and marched into the modern county of Mayo to the shores of the Atlantic. Hugh O'Flaherty, who was the partizan of the sons of Roderic O'Connor, and, therefore, disaffected to Feidlim, joined the English, not only to secure his own property, but in the hope of sharing in the spoils of his neighbours, and, in conjunction with this chief and O'Heyne, the English plundered the islands off the coast, into which the inhabitants of the mainland had carried their more valuable goods. Here they met with a vigorous resistance from a chief of the district, Manus mac Murtough, who possessed a small fleet of war-boats, and carried on a petty war at sea with considerable activity. We see again the effect of the fatal divisions among the Irish, in the remark of the chronicler, that "had Manus been on friendly terms with the O'Malleys, they would have sent their ships against the English fleet."

Feidlim, instead of engaging in vain efforts to resist this horde of ravagers, adopted the policy of carrying off the property and laying waste the country behind them, and then retired into the territory of O'Donnell. When the English "had devastated and

spoiled all Hy-Malia, both by sea and land," about the end of Easter, they marched inland to Ballysadare, to spoil the territory of O'Donnell, in revenge for the protection he had given to Feidlim, or rather, perhaps, because it offered a better prospect of plunder than the country which had been already stripped by the Irish themselves. After having committed their usual ravages here, they crossed the Curlew mountains, and returned to Boyle in the county of Roscommon, where they laid siege to a celebrated and almost inaccessible fortress of the Mac Dermotts, known popularly as the Rock of Lough Key, which was held for Feidlim by a chief of that tribe. The Irish chronicles speak with admiration of the extraordinary engines which the English constructed on this occasion, and by means of which they gained possession of the fortress. But the English garrison retained possession of this important post only twenty days, for after the departure of the English army, Cormac mac Dermott, the chief of the tribe, collected together privately a strong body of his people, and while the English commander and his men had gone out on some expedition at night, one of those left to keep guard, who was an Irishman, opened the gate to his countrymen. The garrison, thus shut out, and weak in numbers, with no place of refuge, surrendered and were safely conducted out of the country. But the Mac Dermotts entirely demolished the fortifications on the rock, that they might not again serve as a harbour to their English enemies.

The king of Connaught, perceiving that all resistance to such powerful enemies was fruitless, now made his submission to the English; and the latter, who in their long circuit of plunder and destruction had made no permanent conquest, readily agreed to leave him in possession of the crown, and restored him the old mensal lands of the kings of Connaught. He was restored to little better than the shadow of a kingdom, for the annalists have left it on record that "by this expedition the English left the people of Connaught without food, raiment, or cattle, and the country without peace or tranquillity, the Irish themselves plundering and destroying one another."

The only remarkable act of Feidlim, after his return, mentioned by the chroniclers, is the demolition of the castle of Meelick, towards the end of the year. Whether this was considered by the English as a ground

of offence, or whether he had given some other cause of suspicion, we are not distinctly informed. Early in the year 1236, Geoffrey fitz Maurice held a convention of the English at Afcoran in the barony of Athlone, which Feidlim of Connaught was summoned to attend. Feidlim came, and on his arrival received secret information that it was the intention of the English to make him their prisoner; on which he fled immediately, attended only by a few horsemen, and closely pursued by the English through the town of Roscommon and over the bridge of Sligo. He escaped, however, and again found refuge in the country of O'Donnell. The English, thus disappointed of their main object, plundered the country around, carrying off, as we are told, a great number of women, and, having deposed Feidlim, the lord justice established Brian the son of Turlough O'Connor in his place. After the departure of Fitz Gerald, the country continued to be laid waste by the contentions between Brian and the English troops who were left to support him and the kinsmen of Feidlim.

At the time of this invasion of Connaught, Richard de Burgh was absent in England, where his presence had been necessary to defend himself against the complaints of his arbitrary acts of violence which had reached the ears of king Henry and his ministers. By means of his friends, who were now again powerful, he made his peace with the king, and escaped with nothing beyond a gentle rebuke; and he immediately returned to Ireland, where, as the Irish annalist observes, "it was not known whether he came for peace or war." This question, however, was soon decided by the re-appearance of Feidlim in the field. He had been invited to return by some of the chiefs of Connaught, who were irritated at the outrages committed under the government of his rival, and, joined by his nephews and many of his friends, he soon found himself at the head of a formidable army. His operations, however, were not successful, for he was defeated by the people of Brian O'Connor, who had attacked his men while they were engaged in plundering; and he fled from Connaught when he heard of the approach of Richard de Burgh, who had hastened to the assistance of his rival Brian. De Burgh seemed resolved to take this occasion of indemnifying himself for what he had lost by not being present at the former invasion, and the native writers complain of the merciless character of his ravages. He

marched from Tuam to Mayo, and after having from thence ravaged the western parts of Connaught, where the inhabitants had no doubt returned with their property after the departure of Maurice fitz Gerald, he returned home by Balla and Tuam, leaving Connaught "without peace or tranquillity, and without food in any church or territory within it." We may judge of the horrors which distinguished these invasions from an incident recorded by one of the Irish chroniclers, who informs us that when a party of the supporters of king Brian (we are not told if they were Irish or English,) came to Imlagh Brocadha, they found the church filled with women, children, and nuns, who had sought an asylum there, upon which they set fire to the sacred edifice and burnt all that were in it, including three priests.

In spite of so many disasters, Feidlim made another attempt to recover his kingdom early in 1237, and this time he met with better success. The multiplied disasters with which the province had been visited had probably disgusted people with the government of Brian, and driven them to desperation, now that they had plundered each other till scarcely anything was left to take. A decisive battle was fought at Druimraitte, or Drumrat, to the north of the Curlew mountains, in which the English and the Irish with whom they were in league were entirely defeated, and Roscommon, which, occupied by English and Irish of Brian's party, had suffered less than other parts of Connaught, fell into the hands of the victors. The annals tell us dryly that after this event the lord justice made peace with Feidlim. It is probable that he was restored to his kingdom on terms advantageous to the English, for we learn that before the end of the year the English barons went into Connaught, and began building castles there.

In these more extensive desolations to which the wretched province of Connaught was exposed, we seem to lose sight entirely of the other parts of Ireland. An accidental notice from time to time leaves us no room to doubt that there were disorders on a smaller scale in the north and in the south. After the comparative pacification of Connaught by the restoration of Feidlim, new troubles broke out in the north, arising apparently from the old rivalry between the Kinel-Connell and the Kinel-Owen, which seem to have led to petty invasions of the English borders as well as of the territory

of Connaught. In the summer of 1238, Geoffrey fitz Maurice and Hugh de Lacy marched into Tyrone and Tircconnell, and having taken hostages for the submission of the north of Ireland to the English government, they deposed Mac Lochlin from the chieftainship of Tyrone, and made Brian, the son of O'Neill, king in his place. Early next year, Mac Lochlin returned, defeated his opponents with great slaughter, and re-assumed the sovereignty, but he was soon after deprived of it a second time. O'Donnell, who had taken so active a part in the affairs of Connaught, appears to have interfered in the disorders of Ulster; in consequence of which the English in the course of this year invaded his territory, and committed great havoc about Carbury and Drumcliff. We are also told, that in one of the partial contests arising out of the disorders of Ulster, a son of Hugh de Lacy, with twenty-eight men "in shirts of mail," were all killed by the Irish.

From this time we hear little of Richard de Burgh, whose private quarrels with Feidlim no longer find a place in the chronicles. That he was still troublesome we learn from the fact, that in 1240, at the very moment when Maurice fitz Gerald was at the English court making his peace with the earl of Pembroke, Feidlim O'Connor, who had at length obtained the king's permission to pass into England, also made his appearance there, and pleaded his wrongs with success. The Irish chronicles tell us that Feidlim went "to complain against both English and Irish, and, having received great honours from the king, he returned safe home." Hubert de Burgh was, at this time, in disgrace, and the king appears to have been willing to listen to any complaints against his kinsmen in Ireland, and he now wrote to his Irish deputy, ordering him, in somewhat florid language, "to pluck up by the root that fruitless sycamore, De Burgh, which Hubert, earl of Kent, in the insolence of his power, had planted in those parts, nor suffer it to bud forth any longer."*

The death of O'Donnell, king of Tircconnell and of the part of Connaught north of the Curlew mountains, in the earlier part of 1241, led to new troubles in the north. His son, Malachy O'Donnell, succeeded him, and he

immediately espoused the cause of the deposed king of Tyrone, Brian O'Neill. In a great battle between the rival chieftains, Mac Lochlin, who occupied the throne, and a number of his kinsmen and other chiefs of the Kinel-Owen, were slain, and Brian was in consequence received as king. Malachy O'Donnell seems also to have stirred up rebellion in Connaught, where Teige O'Connor, Feidlim's nephew, suddenly plundered some of the clans of the county of Leitrim. Maurice fitz Gerald immediately marched an army into Roscommon, and retaliated these outrages on Teige's friends in that district, upon which Teige fled into Tircconnell. Next spring, Maurice fitz Gerald marched with a powerful army into Tircconnell in search of Teige O'Connor, who was at length surrendered to Cuchonaght O'Reilly, of Breffny, one of Feidlim's tributaries, to whose custody he was committed as a prisoner. Early in 1243, O'Reilly not only set his prisoner at liberty on his own responsibility, but joined him in committing depredations on his neighbours. Yet O'Reilly immediately repented of this alliance, and, having appointed a meeting with Teige O'Connor, attacked him suddenly and took him prisoner. Teige's brother Cathal, who was a ward of another of the O'Reillys, also rose in arms against this family, and committed a variety of depredations. Teige was kept in confinement till the fifteenth of February, 1244, and then O'Reilly put out his eyes and otherwise mutilated him. Roderic, another brother of Teige O'Connor, was accidentally drowned on the 9th of March; and a fourth brother, Connor, died nearly about the same time; so that young Cathal was now left alone to struggle against his numerous enemies.

We have frequent occasions to remark the readiness of the Irish chiefs to acknowledge the personal attentions which they received from the English kings, and their anxiety to secure their protection against the rapacious violence of the feudatory barons. Feidlim had remained constant in his friendship to the English government ever since his visit to king Henry; and when, in 1249, this king, engaged in an obstinate war with the Welsh, sent for assistance to Ireland, the king of Connaught presented himself with zeal to march to his aid. The Anglo-Irish barons, on the contrary, showed some reluctance in answering to the summons, insisting upon their exemption from attendance on foreign service, and the tardiness of Maurice

* "Ut ipsius iniquæ plantationis, quam comes Cantie Hubertus in illis partibus, dum sua potentia debaccharet, plantavit, infructuosam sycorum radicis evulsam, non sineret amplius pullulare." See the letter in Rymer.

fitz Gerald gave so much offence to the English monarch, that as soon as he could dispense with his services, he dismissed him from his office of lord justice of Ireland, and appointed John, son of Geoffrey de Marisco, in his place.* The Irish annalists record with gratitude that "the king treated Feidlim O'Connor with great honour in this expedition."

O'Donnell of Tirconnell profited by their absence to invade and plunder some of the eastern districts of Connaught, and thus furnished the occasion for a new war in Ulster. Early in 1246, Maurice fitz Gerald marched with a formidable army of English into Tirconnell, and having reduced O'Donnell to submission, he deprived him of one half of his territory, which he gave to a grandson of Roderic O'Connor, named Cormac, and took hostages of O'Donnell for the other half. The submission of the latter appears to have been a mere feint to gain time, for as soon as the English army had retired, the chiefs of the Kinel-Connell crowded to his banner, and having recovered his own territory, he acted on the offensive, and appeared suddenly before Sligo on the first of November, and burnt the outworks of the town, but the massive walls of the castle defied all his efforts to reduce it. His object in attacking Sligo was to obtain possession of his hostages, which the English had deposited there for safety; and the garrison, following the usual practice on such occasions, put them to death by hanging them from the keep. Early in 1247, Maurice fitz Gerald again marched to punish the turbulence of O'Donnell, and having assembled his forces at Sligo, where he was joined by Cormac O'Connor, they marched to Ballyshannon, where they were joined by Connor O'Connor, another grandson of Roderic. O'Donnell, in the mean time, had collected all the forces of Tirconnell and Tyrone, and he defended the passage of the river at Ballyshannon against them during a whole week. Perceiving that there was no hope of passing the ford here, as long as O'Donnell held the opposite bank, Maurice fitz Gerald dispatched Cormac O'Connor with a strong body of horsemen, who first proceeded in a westerly direction, so as to make the enemy believe he was retreating into Connaught. He then turned southwards, still in the direction of Connaught, until he was quite out of sight of those who were defending the

ford, when he wheeled round, directing his course along the edge of the bog till he came again to the river, which he crossed at the ford of Belacooloon, near Belleck, and thus placed himself in O'Donnell's rear. O'Donnell, surprised at this unexpected attack, turned suddenly to resist it, and left the ford at Ballyshannon feebly defended, on which Fitz Gerald and the English forced their way over, and attacked the enemy on the side of the river. O'Donnell, though thus attacked by his enemies on both sides, fought with obstinacy, but the English gained a sanguinary victory, and O'Donnell and many of the most distinguished chieftains of Ulster were among the slain. The English appointed Roderic O'Cananain king over Tirconnell.

The remainder of this year (1247), and a considerable portion of the year following, was occupied in fierce hostilities between the English settlers in Connaught, who were constantly encroaching upon the possessions of the Irish, and the native chieftains, in which Feidlim appears to have remained almost neuter, for he was reduced to little more than the shadow of authority, the enemies of the English being pursued as rebels against his throne. In the course of this war several of the principal towns in Connaught were plundered and burnt, and a greater number of men of note fell on both sides than had been killed in any previous invasion of this province. The Irish of Ulster had, in the mean time, given new cause of dissatisfaction; and the war in Connaught had scarcely been appeased, when Maurice fitz Gerald marched with an English army into Tirconnell, deposed his own creature O'Cananain, plundered and devastated the country, and then placed as ruler over it Geoffrey O'Donnell, the brother of the chief whom he had slain in battle in the preceding year. O'Cananain fled into Tyrone, and the English had scarcely turned their backs upon Tirconnell, when the Kinel-Owen invaded that kingdom to restore him to the throne; but they were defeated by O'Donnell, and Roderic O'Cananain was slain. This was not the only misfortune which the Kinel-Owen drew upon themselves by their rash zeal in the cause of O'Cananain; for, when the English lord justice heard of their invasion of Tirconnell, he marched into Tyrone with such a formidable army, that O'Neill immediately submitted to the English, and gave hostages for the whole of his territory.

* John de Marisco entered upon his office in 1246.

New disorders were perpetually arising in Connaught, and early in 1249 king Feidlim again fell under the displeasure of the English deputy, who assembled a formidable army at Athlone. Feidlim sent his moveable property into Breffny and into the north, and retired before them. They plundered Breffny, the Irish clans of Roscommon, and various other districts, and then, having made Turlough O'Connor (the son of Hugh, son of Cathal Croivdearg) king in place of Feidlim, the lord justice returned into Meath, and Maurice fitz Gerald established his head quarters at Sligo.

It becomes wearisome to trace, in their details, the petty wars which now devastated every part of the island, except the English possessions, during several successive years; but it is easy to perceive that the English power was gradually becoming ascendant throughout Connaught and Ulster, and the lord justice was enabled, from time to time, to send Irish soldiers to serve in the armies of the English monarch. Yet the weak and uncertain policy of the government in England towards its Irish settlements is shown in the rapid change of the deputies who governed it. In 1251, a new era in the history of the English government in Ireland appeared to have opened, by a formal grant of that kingdom by his father, to prince Edward, the heir to the English throne. The grant contained an express provision that Ireland should never be separated from the English crown. How far the presence of the prince in Ireland might have benefited that country it is impossible now to say; but it does not appear that he ever went thither, although preparations were made to send him over to assume the government in person in 1255. As it was, the absence of the supreme governor, and the contradictory orders of the father and the son, which often came together, for the king's council frequently superseded prince Edward's acts, only added to the embarrassments and difficulties of the government in Dublin.

The year just mentioned, 1255, saw the commencement of several great feuds which continued to desolate various parts of Ireland during the remainder of Henry's reign. The two Irish warriors now most in repute, were Hugh, the son of Feidlim O'Connor, and Geoffrey O'Donnell of Tirconnell. Both were equally hostile to the English, although neither hesitated to league himself with them whenever his private interests were

served by the alliance. In Connaught, which was still torn by the rivalry of the various pretenders to the crown, the English were, at this time, the partisans of the sons of Roderic O'Connor; but the fortunes of Feidlim were in the ascendant, and in the course of the year 1255, Hugh O'Connor, on one side, went into Tyrone, and established peace between his father and the people of Ulster, while, on the other side, Feidlim himself met Walter de Burgh, now the head of the family in Ireland, on the borders of Roscommon and Galway, and a peace was ratified between them, advantageous to the crown of Connaught. Early in the year following Hugh O'Connor met the new lord justice at Rinn Duin in Rosecommon, with a result equally conciliatory.

Thus at peace with his neighbours, the king of Connaught proceeded to crush his domestic enemies. Early in 1256, he marched against the O'Reilly's of Breffny, and defeated them in a sanguinary battle on the plain of Fenagh, in Leitrim. He subsequently proceeded to Sligo, and plundered the lands of some turbulent chiefs in that district. About the same time, Walter de Burgh marched from Claurickard against the O'Flahertys, plundered their territory, and took possession of Lough Corrib. Then, towards the end of the year, Hugh O'Connor quarrelled with the O'Rourkes of the other Breffny, and "without the concurrence of his father Feidlim," plundered their territory the week before Christmas, and, although they had thrown themselves on the protection of the English, he compelled them to make peace with him. O'Donnell also invaded Fermanagh and Breffny of the O'Rourkes, and imposed his conditions on both districts.

Such was peace in Connaught in 1256. In the year following, Hugh O'Connor put out the eyes of two of his young kinsmen, apparently without any other provocation than the fear that their proximity of blood might make them competitors for his father's crown, or, as the Irish annals express it, "through hatred and rivalry," and then he again wreaked his vengeance on the O'Rourkes of Breffny. In some of these acts, especially in his war with the O'Rourkes and the outrage committed on his kinsmen, Hugh O'Connor appears to have acted in defiance of the wishes of his father, and the English themselves received provocations sufficient, on ordinary occasions, to have driven them into hostilities. But their

policy towards Connaught was at this time more pacific in its character, and at a conference held at Athlone, Feidlim gave satisfaction in presence of the lord justice, Maurice fitz Gerald, Walter de Burgh, and other lords, and the peace between them was confirmed by all parties. The English barons then proceeded to Sligo, to repress an invasion of their territory there by Geoffrey O'Donnell, but the English sustained a severe defeat at Creadran near Sligo, in consequence of which the town was taken and burnt, and the English were compelled to evacuate the whole district, and retreat into Meath. In the heat of this battle O'Donnell and Fitz Gerald met in personal combat, and both were carried away desperately wounded.

The death of O'Donnell was not unworthy of the fame he had already earned by his valiant actions. While this hero of his tribe, who had been carried mournfully by his people to his residence in an island in Lough Beagh, in the county of Donegal, lay there in a languishing state, without hope of recovery, Brian O'Neill of Tyrone took advantage of the weakness of its chief, and of the uncertain succession, for he had no children, to make an attempt to seize upon the chieftainship of Tirconnell. He sent messengers to demand of O'Donnell the hostages of his kingdom, the delivery of whom was the usual mode of declaring a successor, while he marched his army to the banks of the Swilly. The indignant spirit of O'Donnell rose superior to the feebleness of his body, and, having sent away O'Neill's messenger with contempt, he summoned the Kinel-Connell to assemble in haste, to receive his last commands. He then directed his coffin to be prepared, and placing himself in it, his faithful attendants carried him thus in the middle of the army, which marched forwards to encounter their old hostile brethren of Tyrone. When they met, the battle was obstinate and sanguinary, each party, to use the words of the native annalist, fighting "without regard to friend or relative," but at length the Tir-Owen were entirely defeated, and O'Neill was compelled to retreat hastily into his own territory. The people of Tirconnell marched in triumph from the field of battle, until they reached the village of Conwall, near Letterkenny in Donegal, where they laid down the coffin of O'Donnell in the middle of the road, and then for the first time they perceived that their chieftain had breathed his last.

When O'Donnell's death became publicly

known, Brian O'Neill, in spite of his defeat, repeated his claim to his succession, and demanded the hostages. The Kinel-Connell, proud of their victory and of the distinguished bravery of their chief, and actuated by all that jealousy of the Kinel-Owen which had led to so much bloodshed, and was leading gradually to the subjugation of Ulster by their common enemy the English, and aware at the same time that they had no chiefs of the family of O'Donnell, to which they were attached, who were worthy to succeed him, agreed to hold a great meeting to consult about the election of a king. In the midst of their deliberations, a young scion of the O'Donnell stock named Brian Oge, who had been carried to Scotland in his boyhood to save him from the troubles of his country, and who had now returned in haste, knowing himself to be the nearest kinsman of Geoffrey O'Donnell, suddenly made his appearance before the assembled multitude, and was at once acknowledged as their chieftain. O'Neill appears to have acquiesced silently, if unwillingly, in this election, occupied probably with other designs of still greater moment.

Hugh O'Connor of Connaught, whose successes over the partizans of the rival claimants to his father's throne, as well as the facility shown by the English in renewing peace with his father, had raised his pride and fed his ambition, aspired to be the leader, or at least the founder, of a new confederacy of the native Irish to expel the English from the island. The temporary weakness of the English government, and the success of O'Donnell in the year preceding, had shown that the Irish were capable of defeating their enemies in fair battle. Accordingly, a great meeting of the Irish chiefs was held at Caol-Uisce, near Newry, soon after the election of the new chief of the Kinel-Connell, at which Hugh O'Connor and Brian O'Neill were present. After some discussion, it appears that O'Neill was flattered by the general agreement to acknowledge him as king of Ireland, which thus placed him at the head of the league. The whole of the year following seems to have been spent in secret preparations, and in the course of the summer Hugh O'Connor and Brian O'Neill held a conference on Devenish island in Lough Erne. It was here, probably, that they determined, in deference to the personal interests and enmities of O'Neill, to commence the attack in Ulster by expelling the English from Down.

The English, however, were not, as expected, taken by surprise. A new and able lord justice, Stephen Longespee, had arrived in Ireland, and he proceeded without delay to meet the insurgents. The first and last battle, one famous among the old Irish annalists and poets for its disastrous consequences, was fought in the spring of 1260, at the city of Down, which the Irish army had already reached. It was obstinately contested, but the mailed warriors of the English Pale at length overthrew their

opponents with terrible slaughter, and Brian O'Neill himself, with a great number of the chiefs of Tyrone and Connaught, were left dead on the field. Hugh O'Connor made his retreat to Connaught; but the grand confederacy had been destroyed at one blow, and the result was so disastrous to the O'Neills, that it was long before that family became in any degree formidable. The English lord justice was left at liberty to repress other troubles which had arisen in the south and west.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GERALDINES IN MUNSTER, AND THE DE BURGHS IN CONNAUGHT; STATE OF IRELAND DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD I.



UR attention has been called off by the importance of the transactions in Ulster and Connaught, till we are almost losing sight of the great province of the south which was now on the point of becoming the scene of disorders of the most formidable kind; and, indeed, the contemporary annalists are too much absorbed with the movement of the O'Connors and the O'Neills to take notice of these disorders, until they assumed such a character that they necessarily intruded themselves on the view.

Since the rebuke conveyed to Maurice fitz Gerald by his removal from the government of Ireland, his family, proud in their great possessions and in their alliances, held themselves aloof from the court at Dublin, and lived in their castles in Munster, like independent princes. The Mac Carthys of Desmond and the O'Briens of Thomond were equally provoked and enraged at the insolence and tyranny of their English neighbours, while the government of Dublin was too weak and vacillating to interfere with any effect. Stephen Longespee, who had been appointed lord justice early in 1259, was treacherously slain by his own people before he had enjoyed his office many months; and William Den, a man of no weight or influence in Ireland, was sent to succeed him in 1260. Soon after his

arrival, the Mac Carthys, acting perhaps in concert with the great confederacy headed by O'Neill of Tyrone, and encouraged by a defeat which the English had sustained in Thomond during the preceding year, rose in arms in 1261 under one of the ablest chiefs who had ever ruled the Eugenician clan, Fineen mac Carthy. According to some authorities, the new lord justice, with Walter de Burgh earl of Ulster, Walter de Riddlesford of Leinster, and other barons, hastened to the assistance of the Geraldines; but, be this as it may, the latter were so signally defeated by the Mac Carthys in a battle at Kilgarvan, in the county of Kerry, that, to use the quaint language of the old historian Hanmer, for a long time the Geraldines durst not put plough in ground in their own country. Among other distinguished members of the family of Fitz Gerald slain on this occasion was the lord John fitz Thomas, founder of the monastery of Tralee, with his son, and eight barons, and fifteen knights. Although Fineen mac Carthy was himself slain by the English soon afterwards, the Irish of Desmond, under his brother, continued to ravage the estates of their English enemies with fire and sword with little opposition, until at length the personal feuds which invariably showed themselves among the natives in the hour of prosperity, made them again a prey to their enemies, and the Geraldines again recovered their power, and became prouder and more insolent than ever.

Among those who had contributed most powerfully to humble the Mac Carthys on this occasion, were the De Burghs of Clanrickard. Walter de Burgh, who had now inherited the earldom of Ulster, had invaded Desmond in 1264, and penetrated to the neighbourhood of Killarney, where several of the bravest of the Mac Carthys were slain, although De Burgh is represented as having been defeated. But these two great houses, the De Burghs and the Fitz Gerald, soon ceased to act conjointly against their common enemy, the Irish. Rival claims, or jealousies of some kind or other, led to a desperate feud between the young Maurice fitz Gerald and Walter de Burgh earl of Ulster, in which early in 1264 these two English barons drew the sword against each other, which led to such extensive ravages that, as the Irish chronicles inform us, a large portion of Ireland was laid waste between them. The earl of Ulster commenced by attacking Fitz Gerald's castles in Connaught, which from the position of his own great estates were most exposed to him, and he burnt and plundered all the manors of the Geraldines in that province. It appears that Richard de Capella, a new English lord justice, took part with the De Burghs, and he seems to have appointed a meeting of the barons of both party at Castledermot, in Kildare, probably to attempt a reconciliation. But the Geraldines came in greater force than their opponents, and by the orders of Maurice fitz Gerald and John fitz Thomas, the persons of the lord justice, Richard de Burgh (heir to the earldom of Ulster), Theobald le Botiler, John de Cogan, and some others of their party, were violently seized, dragged from the church in which they were assembled, and thrown into prison in the castles of Ley and Dunamase. In consequence of this unexampled act of violence against the authority of the English government in Ireland, a parliament was assembled at Kilkenny, and at its decree the Geraldines were obliged to set their prisoners at liberty. But the offence they had committed against the English crown was not soon forgotten. Richard de Capella was recalled, and a man of greater vigour and of more influence in Ireland, David de Barry, the ancestor of the noble family of Barrymore, was appointed lord justice. He immediately exerted his authority in curbing the power and insolence of the Geraldines, deprived them of many of their castles, and restored peace between them and the De Burghs.

The sanguinary feud between these two houses caused a greater sensation among the English in Ireland than years of hostilities against the native Irish, and may have been traced in numerous little incidents more or less romantic. One of these minor events which has been recorded most fully by the old historians, and the memory of which has been preserved in a short Anglo-Norman ballad or poem still in existence, was the walling of the town of New Ross, on the Barrow near Waterford. Tradition has preserved a story relating to this event which is strongly characteristic of the predatory habits of the age, when not only plundering parties, but individuals of the different races, were constantly on the look out for an opportunity to rob each other. The Irish annals record, under the date 1249, the death of a warrior of Ossory, named Donough O'Gillpatrick, who is described as the "third greatest plunderer of the English in all Ireland." It is added, that he was in the habit of going about to reconnoitre the English market towns, in different guises least likely to attract attention, as a pauper, carpenter, turner, poet, or merchant, to seize opportunities for robbing or slaying.*

It was, perhaps, some such "plunderer" as this, who, according to the legend just alluded to, entered the then open town of New Ross, early in the year 1265. The Irishman was on horseback, and he rode up to a merchant's stall and chose a valuable piece of cloth, for which he offered a low price. The merchant and the stranger stood for some time haggling about the price, until the latter, pretending to agree to the seller's terms, allowed it to be safely deposited on the back of his horse, and then suddenly setting spurs to its sides, rode away without paying for his purchase, and as no one was mounted ready, and he had no town-gates to pass, it was in vain to attempt to overtake him. This insulting depredation caused a great commotion in the town, and a public meeting of the burghers was called to consult on the most efficient measures for checking future depredators of the same description. At length a rich widow named Rose, who had great influence among the

* His fame was consecrated in a proverbial quatrain in Irish verse, of which the following is a literal translation.

"He is a carpenter, he is a turner,
My nursling is a bookman,
He is selling wine and hides,
Whenever he sees a gathering."

townsmen, stood forth, and not only proposed, as a safeguard to the town, that it should be immediately surrounded with a ditch and walls, but added the patriotic offer to contribute largely to this desirable undertaking with her own purse. The proposal was at once agreed to, and, without delay, the whole body of the townsmen set themselves to the work, marching to it in companies to relieve each other, and encouraged by the presence and counsels of the liberal dame with whom it had originated. Trenches and ditches were forthwith cut in the earth or quarried in the rock, and the latter furnished stones which were soon raised into walls and towers, so that in an incredibly small space of time the town was surrounded with a defence which might set at defiance its Irish enemies.

The ballad above alluded to, composed in the language then most in use among the educated classes of society in England, and among the English of Ireland, by some merry minstrel, who probably sung it to the burghers during the progress of the work, describes how the townsmen marched in their companies to dig in the foss, the first process of fortification, which was not completed at the time of the composition of the poem. The townsmen, we are told, alarmed at the war between the Geraldines and the De Burghs,* determined, as a measure of precaution, to surround New Ross with a ditch and wall. Accordingly, they hired men, and set a hundred or more to work daily, but they went on too slowly for the impatient burghers, who knew not how soon they might be attacked by one party or the other. Another council was therefore held, in which it was resolved that, depending no longer on the tardy labour of men whose only stimulation was their wages, the townsmen should go to the work themselves, and, for this purpose, the population of the town was divided into companies, according to the trade corporations, each company taking their turns alternately on the successive days of the week. The minstrel, who was no doubt one of the townsmen, praises the fairness of his town, and its population appears to have been considerable. On the Monday morning, at

break of day, a company of more than a thousand men, composed of the vintners, mercers, drapers, and "merchants," marched in grand procession to the foss, with banners flying, and flutes and tabours playing, and there they worked without ceasing till noon. Then they returned home in the same order, their young men shouting and singing in triumph. Even the priests, as soon as they had sung their morning service, hastened to join in the work, and the minstrel slyly insinuates, that these brawny and well-fed servants of holy church did more work than all the rest together.* When these left at noon, the mariners came in procession, with their banner bearing the figure of a ship, and worked till night. There were only six hundred of these, many of them of course being absent on shipboard, but had they been all there, we are assured that their number would have amounted to not less than eleven hundred. Tuesday was allotted to the tailors and habit-makers, with the dyers, fullers, and sadlers, all fair and good people, but less numerous than the other trades, for they amounted only to four hundred. The shoemakers, tanners, and butchers, who worked on the Wednesday, were only three hundred all together, but they were strong men, and full of spirits, and they marched to their work singing gaily, with showily-painted banners. The fishermen and the hucksters, to the number of four hundred, took their turn on Thursday; and their procession was closed by thirty-two wainwrights (*waynpayns*), on whose banner was figured a fish and a platter. The name of the trade of those who worked on the Friday, is unfortunately erased in the manuscript; but they were succeeded on the Saturday by the carpenters, smiths, and masons, in number three hundred and fifty, who, by the earnestness with which they worked, made a creditable close of the week's labours of the men of New Ross. But the undertaking was too important to be allowed to rest, even on Sunday, when, while the men reposed themselves, the ladies of the town went to the foss, in such numbers, and so richly dressed, and so beautiful, that the minstrel declares he never heard of so many ladies in a foss before. "Happy," he adds,

* "Mès poure avoint de un gerre,
Qe, fu parentre deus barouns,
Veici escrit amdeus lur nuns,
Sire Morice e Sire Wauter."

I think there can be little doubt the two barons were Maurice fitz Gerald and Walter de Burgh earl of Ulster.

* "E les prestres, quant ont chanté,
Si vont overir au fossé,
E travaillent mut durement,
Plus qe ne funt autre gent;
Kar il sunt jevenz e vilysés,
E grans e forts, ben sojornés."

"would be the man who might have his choice of them."* It was the work of the ladies to collect stones, and place them along the foss, ready for building the walls, and they carried them in procession, with banners flying before them like the men. When they had done their day's work, they returned home singing joyfully, and then they met together with mirth and wine, and they declared that they would build one of the gates, which should be called the Ladies' Gate, and that they would have their prison in it, where all who gave offence to the fair sex should be confined at their will. Thus did the townspeople of New Ross gaily and playfully amuse themselves amid the horrible devastations which were carried on in the country around. But the minstrel goes on to tell us that, as soon as their walls were finished, so that they would no longer fear being taken by surprise, they could set their enemies at defiance, even if they came with an army of forty thousand men; for the town was well stored with all kinds of arms and munitions, and its numerous inhabitants were men with stout hearts, and all drilled to war. He then enumerates the fighting-men of the town who regularly assembled at their musters, consisting of three hundred and sixty-three arbalisters, of twelve hundred good bowmen, of three thousand armed with spears and axes, and of a hundred and four well armed horsemen. "But," says the rhymers, "brave as are the townsmen of Ross, they are peaceful and tranquil, and only desire to be let alone; although there is not an Irishman in Ireland that dare attack them, but, when the town horn has been twice sounded, you will see the citizens rushing to their arms, each emulous of the other in his eagerness to be the first to engage the enemy."†

- * "Ki qe là fut pur esgarder,
Meint bele dame y put-il veer,
Meint mantel de escarlet,
E de verd e de burnet,
E meint bone roket bien risée,
Meint blank fen ben colourée,
Ke unkes en tere où je ai esté,
Tantz bele dames ne vi en fossée.
Mult fu cil en bon ure née,
Ke purreit choiser à sa volenté.

- † "N'ad Irés en Irland si hardi,
Qi l'oserent asailler, je vus plevi,
Qe kant unt j. corne ij. feez cornée,
Tantost la commune est ensemblée,
E as armes vont tost corant;
Chascun a envie pur aler devant,
Pur eus venger de lur enemy."

This song is preserved in a curious little manuscript,

Little episodes like this form no disagreeable interruption in the drier narrative of the ordinary chroniclers. They make us better acquainted with the condition and manners of the age, and they show us the sentiments which actuated the masses of the people.

When the lord justice, David de Barry, established peace on one side by repressing the overgreat power of the Geraldines, he laid the foundation of future troubles on the other by increasing the insolence and rapacity of their rivals the De Burghs, who immediately began to extend their claims upon the territory of the king of Connaught. Walter de Burgh was already at war with Feidlim when the feud broke out between him and Maurice fitz Gerald, and he concluded a hasty peace, by the mediation of the lord justice, partly because Feidlim had made a new application for protection to the king of England and had received a favourable answer, and partly that he might be at leisure to wreak his resentment on the Geraldines. Feidlim O'Connor died in 1265, in the monastery which he had himself founded at Roscommon; and he was succeeded by his son Hugh, already remarkable for his unscrupulous turbulence and for his enmity to the English. No sooner had Hugh O'Connor assumed the sovereignty of Connaught, than he made what the annalists call "his regal plundering excursion" into Offaly, which was itself a defiance of the English government, and then, returning to Athlone, he cruelly maimed one of the young princes of the blood of Connaught, Cathal, the son of Teige O'Connor, by putting out his eyes, from the effects of which he soon afterwards died. A predatory warfare continued during this and the two following years, in the course of which Hugh O'Connor put out the eyes of some other Irish chieftains. The English were attacked in Sligo and in other parts of Connaught, and Hugh O'Connor invaded Breffny, deposed one chieftain of the O'Rourkes, and established another of the same family in his place. On the other side Walter de Burgh made several successful plundering expeditions on the Irish possessions in different parts of Connaught.

Before the end of 1267, Hugh O'Connor was struck with a grievous disease which

written apparently at Waterford at the beginning of the fourteenth century, or about forty years after the event here described. The song is printed with a version by L. E. L. in Mr. Crofton Croker's "Popular Songs of Ireland."

rendered him incapable of action for several months; but on his partial recovery towards the summer of 1268, he marched against the English, who were assembled at Athlone, and defeated them in the woody district known as the Faes or O'Naghten's country. The English in Connaught appear to have taken advantage of O'Connor's bodily weakness, and were now engaged incessantly in hostilities with the Irish. The Irish annalists tell us that, until Hugh's recovery, "the Connacians were plundered and trodden under foot by the English." In the latter part of 1269, we find Maurice fitz Gerald rebuilding his castle of Sligo, which had been destroyed by the Irish, and a new lord justice, Robert de Ufford, erecting a castle at Roscommon.

At length Hugh O'Connor did recover his health in the beginning of 1270, and then a "great war," which broke out between him and Walter de Burgh, so great, says the old chronicler, "that all the English and Irish of the kingdom, could not keep them asunder," took the place of the petty warfare which had preceded. The lord justice at the head of the army of Leinster marched to join Walter de Burgh, rather, as it would seem, as a mediator than with any intention of joining in the war, and the two English armies passed their first night after they came together at Roscommon, and the second at Antrim, whence they marched next day to Port-leece, and then to Carrick-on-Shannon, where they crossed that river. In passing the woods of Conmaiene they were attacked by parties of Irish and lost some men, but they committed no hostilities till they came to Moy-nise, where Hugh O'Connor was encamped with the Irish army. It was here that the lord justice appears to have interfered to effect a reconciliation, and it was agreed that Walter de Burgh should send his brother William to the Irish camp as a hostage while Hugh came in person to his camp to ratify the peace. But when William de Burgh reached the camp of O'Connor, he was suddenly set upon and made a prisoner, while his attendants were slain by the Irish. Walter de Burgh was indignant at this act of treachery, and is described as passing the night in "sadness and sorrow." Next morning he drew up his army in battle array, and, making a circuit apparently to attack O'Connor on better ground, fell in with Turlough O'Brien, his old enemy of Thomond, who was on his march to join O'Connor against the English.

De Burgh immediately engaged this auxiliary army, and encountering O'Brien in the fight, slew him with his own hand. But Hugh O'Connor had taken the opportunity to attack De Burgh on the other side with his whole army, and the English thrown into confusion by this double attack, and by the nature of the ground, were compelled to retreat with considerable loss. Immediately after the battle, Hugh O'Connor, with the ungenerous barbarity which appears in so many of his actions, ordered William de Burgh to be put to death in cold blood, in retaliation, as he pretended, for the death of Turlough O'Brien, who had been slain in battle.

O'Connor and his Irish army, instead of pursuing Walter de Burgh, invaded the English settlements in Mayo, Roscommon, and Clare, in search of plunder, and burnt or threw down a number of the English castles; while the English army, which had soon recovered from its defeat, turned off into the Irish territory, and committed similar ravages. Before this war was at an end; early in 1271, Walter de Burgh earl of Ulster, died in the castle of Galway. His death was followed next year by that of Henry king of England, and a new monarch was placed on the English throne whose vigour of character gave hopes of amelioration in the government of Ireland.

Even in England, the demise of the sovereign was usually in these times the signal for a certain degree of tumult and disorder; and we cannot therefore be surprised if this was the case to a much greater degree in a country so badly governed as Ireland had been during the greater part of the reign of Henry III. An old writer, describing the general revolt against the English in that island immediately after the accession of Edward I., says it was as if all the Irish people had risen up in arms.* A short time before the death of king Henry, the lord justice, James de Audley, having been killed by an accidental fall from his horse, Maurice fitz Maurice (fitz Gerald) appears to have been elected by the council to succeed him. In the wild rising which now threatened every part of the English settlements, while in Connaught the Irish were destroying castle after castle, including the important fortresses of Sligo, Aldleck, and Roscommon, and even penetrated into the most flourishing parts of Leinster, the lord justice had so

* "Quasi omnes Hiberni guerraverunt."

little dependence upon his own people, that he was betrayed by them into the hands of the enemy, who captured him in the district of Offaly, and threw him into prison. Walter de Geneville, who had married a daughter of Walter de Lacy and was lately returned from the Holy Land, was appointed to succeed him, and was immediately called into the field to resist the incursions of the Irish into Meath and Leinster, but he had the mortification to suffer a signal defeat.

When Maurice fitz Maurice was, in 1273, released from confinement, he retired to his own lands in Munster, and there uniting with another powerful baron, Theobald de Botiler, or Butler, and without consulting the council at Dublin, he invaded Thomond, and forced the O'Briens to give him hostages for their submission. Troubles broke out nearly at the same time in Connaught and in Ulster. In the former province, Hugh O'Connor closed his turbulent life at the beginning of the summer 1274. The bare statement of the annalists that his successor Owen O'Connor, after he had reigned only three months, was slain by a near kinsman in the church of the friars at Roscommon, and that his successor Hugh O'Connor was killed by two of his chieftains after he had reigned a fortnight, and was then succeeded by Teige O'Connor, conveys a sufficient notion of the fearful state of anarchy to which that unfortunate kingdom was now reduced. Ulster was ravaged by a new war between the rival tribes of the Kinel-Owen and the Kinel-Connell, and Tirconnell and Tyrone were successively the scene of the ravages of either party, assisted in more than one instance by the interference of the English. To add to the sufferings of the north, the Scots and Redshanks from the isles and highlands made a sudden descent on the coast, and desolated the maritime districts with fire and sword. In revenge for this invasion, Richard de Burgh and Eustace le Poer, with an army from Ireland, laid waste the Scottish isles and part of the Highlands, and not content with putting to death every one they met, they hunted those who were concealed in the caves which a portion of the population of those districts then inhabited, and smoked them out, or destroyed them by suffocation, by lighting great fires at the entrance. A new pretender to the throne of Connaught was raised up in 1276 in the person of Hugh Muimneach, said to have been an illegitimate son of Feidlim; at least he was suddenly brought from Munster, and, according to the

expression of the old chroniclers, "fathered" upon that monarch, and, with the assistance of O'Donnell of Tirconnell, succeeded in possessing himself of the chieftainship.

In Thomond, a new war had been lighted up by a grant of lands bestowed on Thomas de Clare, a son of the earl of Gloucester, who had become allied with the family of the Geraldines by his marriage with Juliana the daughter of Maurice fitz Maurice. It is not very clear whether De Clare had received his lands from the English crown, or from one of the two competitors who were now striving for the chieftainship of Connaught, as the price of his assistance against his rival; in fact, the whole history, like that of so many of the sanguinary transactions which darken the Irish annals at this period, is involved in considerable obscurity, though it appears evident that the conduct of the English baron was marked by cruel treachery. The two O'Briens who disputed the principality of Thomond were Brian Ruadh, and his nephew Turlough; and it was with the former that Thomas de Clare entered into bonds of the closest friendship and alliance, confirmed it was said with the most solemn ceremonies which belonged to the old Irish custom of gossipred. De Clare and Brian Ruadh marched with an army of English and Irish against the rival competitor, but to the great mortification of the English baron, they were totally defeated in a sanguinary battle. De Clare immediately wreaked his vengeance upon his unfortunate ally; for having drawn him treacherously into his power, he ordered him to be torn to death between horses. Such a refinement of cruelty must have arisen from the suspicion of treachery, or from some other grievous offence with which we are not acquainted, and which led him now to seek an alliance with the rival against whom he had so lately fought, and whom he is said to have tried to conciliate by making a merit of the slaughter of his uncle. But a son of the murdered chief, named Donough, arose to support Brian Ruadh's cause, and De Clare seems to have wavered between both parties. The war, however, was carried on with redoubled fury, and ended in the total defeat of the Geraldines. On one occasion, when fighting against Donough at Quinn in the county of Clare, Thomas de Clare was defeated and narrowly escaped, while a large party of the English were burnt in the church. At another time, when espousing the cause of Donough, De Clare

and his ally defeated Turlough, and drove him into the woods and defiles, but as they were pursuing their advantage, the Irish chieftain returned by a circuitous path known only to the Irish, and falling suddenly on their rear, gained a decisive victory. In one of his expeditions, De Clare and his father-in-law Fitz Maurice, with part of their forces, were drawn into a pass in the mountains of Slieve-Bloom, where they were starved into an unconditional surrender. The final result was the division of Thomond between Donough and Turlough; hostages were given by the Geraldines for the "eraic" or compensation for the death of the murdered chieftain, and the castle of Roscommon, held by Maurice fitz Maurice, was surrendered to the Irish.

It is said that when Thomas de Clare led his troops out of the territories of these rival chiefs, he exclaimed that "the first of them who would lay waste the lands of the other, should be his friend for life," so well were the English aware that their chief strength lay in the disunion and rivalry among the native Irish.* In reference to these and other disorders in different parts of the island, the lord justice, Robert de Ufford, who had succeeded Walter de Geneville, when called upon by king Edward to answer for permitting them to continue unpunished, replied that "he thought it not amiss to let rebels murder one another, as it would save the king's coffers, and purchase peace for the land."

Scarcely had Thomond been pacified, when Connaught was again thrown into an alarming state of disorder. There had been no peace in that country during the reign of Hugh Muinneach, and this chieftain was himself slain in a fray in Galway with some of the legitimate O'Connors in the year 1280. Next year occurred the great battle at Desertcreight in Tyrone, between the O'Donnells and the O'Neills, which was long celebrated in Irish story for the number of chieftains of both parties who fell. The people of Tireconnell, who appear to have been the aggressors, were defeated, and lost their chief. The English of Ulster fought on this occasion under the banner of Tyrone; and it is noted in the annals of this year that, while the English were thus assisting in the quarrels of the Irish in one part of

the island, some of the Irish, in another, joined in a war between two English families, the Baretts and the Cusacks, who fought a battle in Mayo in which the Baretts were defeated with the loss of several of their principal men.

The disorders caused by the rivalry between the two great families of the north continued unabated for several years. In 1283, the O'Neill who ruled in Tyrone was slain in an encounter with the Mac Mahons of Orgial. The next year, the slaughter of an English chief, Simon de Exeter, gave rise to new hostilities between the Irish and English in Connaught, in which the latter "committed great depredations." In this war the De Berminghams acted a prominent part. During 1285, the Irish of Connaught appear to have been more successful, and in a battle fought at Ballysadare the English were defeated with considerable loss. To repress these disorders, the earl of Ulster, Walter de Burgh, marched into Connaught with a powerful army, and his progress was accompanied with the usual devastations. After having overcome every opposition, he took hostages for the submission of all Connaught to the English, and then, leading with him the army of that kingdom, he marched with a still more imposing force into Tireconnell and Tyrone, and compelled Ulster to submit in like manner to the English, and deliver hostages. Before his return, he exercised his authority in deposing the O'Neill who then ruled in Tyrone, and appointing another of the family in his place.

Amid such disorders as those which had prevailed in every part of the island during the latter years of the reign of Henry III. and the earlier part of that of his successor, it is not surprising if the miserable natives made an attempt to put themselves under the protection of the English laws. Early in Edward's reign, a petition to this effect, purporting to come from the "community" of Ireland, was presented to the king, who received it favourably, and showed a readiness to grant their request which contrasted strangely with the obstinate opposition which it met with from the Irish barons, without whose concurrence Edward declared his unwillingness to decide on so important a matter. He accordingly issued his mandate to the lords spiritual and temporal of Ireland, as well as to the body of the English subjects there, to assemble and deliberate on the prayer of their Irish brethren.

* There was something almost prophetic in Thomas de Clare's exclamation, for we learn from the Irish annals that, in 1284, "Donough O'Brien lord of Thomond was slain by Turlough O'Brien."

Ireland was the worst place to put this question in deliberation, for it was one that involved to an extraordinary degree the interests and prejudices of the English barons. Civilization had not yet advanced to that point when it is understood that a conquered people has the same natural rights, and may appeal to the same laws, as its conquerors; and while the English monarch was desirous of considering the whole population of Ireland as his subjects, the English barons in Ireland were willing to regard the Irish population only in the light of enemies whom they might plunder and slaughter at will. In the eyes of the law, as it now stood, an Irishman could not plead in an English court, and his only chance of obtaining justice was by the barbarous practice of taking the law into his own hands. Two cases illustrative of this state of things have been often quoted from the records of Edward's reign, in one of which, an Englishman, being sued for certain goods, pleaded merely that the plaintiff was an Irishman, and therefore had no right to demand them; and in the other, an Englishman being charged with murder, or at least with manslaughter, acknowledged the fact, but pleaded that the dead man was only an Irishman. In general, the Irish who were out of the Pale were considered by the English as being not much above wild-beasts, which they might hunt and destroy at pleasure.

The petition of what king Edward calls the Commons of Ireland,* in 1278, can only have come from a small portion of the Irish people, representing perhaps those dwelling within the English Pale, but it shows a consciousness of the cause of the evils under which they were suffering, and a readiness to deliberate pacifically for their redress, which we should hardly expect from the contemptuous manner in which the English writers speak of their barbarism, or even from the savage turbulence recorded in the Irish annals. King Edward, in his mandate to the lord justice Robert de Ufford, after expressing his great satisfaction at the representations he had received from his deputy relating to the improvement in the state and peace of his land of Ireland, states that, having received from the Commons of Ireland an offer of eight thousand marks on condition of granting them the laws of England to be used in the aforesaid land, and understanding that the laws used by the Irish themselves were "hateful to God and

* "Communitas Hibernie."

repugnant to all justice," he had conferred with his council, and that it had appeared to him and them expedient to grant the petition, and he expresses his willingness to do so, provided such indulgence met with the approbation of the English in Ireland, or at least of the prelates and nobles. He accordingly commands the lord justice to enter into treaty with the petitioners, and to consult with the English commons, prelates, and nobles, on the subject, and then, with the agreement of both parties, having first obtained "the highest fine of money he could to be paid to the king on this account," to make such a composition with the said people as was most for the king's honour and interest. It was further to be provided that, in return for this concession, besides the fine of money, the Irish were to assist the king in his wars with a body of foot soldiers to serve in the English armies.

We are ignorant what steps were taken upon this mandate; it is said that the barons stated as an excuse for disobeying it, that it was impossible to comply with the king's commands, in the state of the country at that moment, and we may be satisfied from the spirit shown by them on many other occasions that they did their utmost to evade them. They appear, among other things, to have alleged as a reason for not entering upon the subject, the impossibility of assembling the barons of the land in council, when the greater part of them were dispersed in different parts for the necessary defence of the king's land, while many were under age and in ward. The king, with the wisdom and foresight which shed so much glory upon his reign, was impatient at the tardiness of the government of Ireland in carrying his intentions into effect, and after waiting two years, addressed in 1280 a much more pressing mandate to the spiritual and temporal barons and to all the English in Ireland, reminding them of the former petition and of the delay they had shown in taking it into consideration, declaring his own desire to carry it into effect combined with his unwillingness to act without their agreement, commanding them to assemble at a period which he fixes to consider whether it might be done without prejudice to themselves, and ordering, evidently in allusion to former excuses, that no further delay should be made on pretence of the absence of some barons or the minority of others.

We are not informed by any of the old historians whether the Anglo-Irish barons

ever met to deliberate upon this second mandate. It is certain that the petition of the Irish was not granted, and their English rulers long afterwards continued to persist in that fatal policy which permitted no man of Irish blood to be considered as other than an alien in the eyes of the English law, with the exception of a small number who obtained special grants of participation in it. "As long as they were thus out of the protection of the law," to use the oft quoted words of an old writer on the English policy in Ireland (Sir John Davis), "so as every Englishman might oppress, spoil, and kill them without controlment, how was it possible they should be other than outlaws and enemies to the crown of England? If the king would not admit them to the condition of subjects, how could they learn to acknowledge and obey him as their sovereign? When they might not converse or commune with any civil men, nor enter into any town

or city without peril of their lives, whither should they fly but into the woods and mountains, and there live in a wild and barbarous manner? If the English magistrates would not rule them by the rule which doth punish murder and treason and theft with death, but leave them to be ruled by their own lords and laws, why should they not embrace their own Brehon law, which punisheth no offence but with a fine or *eraic*? If the Irish be not permitted estates of freeholds or inheritance, which might descend to their children, according to the course of our common law, must they not continue their custom of 'tanistry,' which makes all their possessions uncertain, and brings confusion, barbarism, and incivility? In a word, if the English would neither in peace govern them by the law, nor in war root them out by the sword, must they not needs be pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, till the world's end?"

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUED INSOLENCE OF THE ANGLO-IRISH BARONS; RICHARD DE BURGH, THE RED EARL; WILLIAM DE VESCY AND JOHN FITZ THOMAS; JOHN WOGAN, AND HIS PARLIAMENT; ACCESSION OF EDWARD II.



SOON after the reduction of Connaught and Ulster to temporary submission to the English lord justice, before the end of the year 1286, the death of three of the great barons of

that family, Maurice fitz Gerald, Gerald fitz Maurice, and Thomas de Clare, depressed considerably the power of the Geraldines, and raised proportionally that of the De Burghs, the head of which house, Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, popularly known by the title of the Red Earl, soon became so powerful, that the government itself was obliged to connive at his insolence, and king Edward was sometimes under the necessity of addressing him rather than his deputy, to obtain an immediate attention to his commands. It was he who, in the year just mentioned, had taken the hostages of Connaught and Ulster; and not long afterwards, presuming on his own power, and on the weakness of the government in Dublin, he boldly laid claim to the possessions in

Meath which had descended by the daughter of Walter de Lacy to Theobald de Verdon, and marched an army into that province to establish his claims by force. De Verdon was closely besieged in one of his own castles; and the Irish having seized the opportunity of rising to share in the spoils, the lands in dispute were ravaged and laid desolate, although the invaders were ultimately obliged to withdraw without having obtained the object for which they came.

The red earl soon found occupation for his arms in other quarters. The various branches of the royal stock of the O'Connors of Connaught had never ceased to war or to plot against each other; and in 1288 a new revolution was effected by the rebellion of Manus O'Connor, who encountered and defeated the forces of the reigning prince, Cathal O'Connor, in Roscommon, and, having taken Cathal prisoner, formally deposed him, and assumed the sovereignty himself. Manus was subsequently wounded in an attack upon his own house by some of the O'Connors who were still in arms against him, but he

soon recovered, and proceeding against the turbulent clan of the Siol-Murray, who were the most zealous supporters of his rival, obliged them to acknowledge him as king of Connaught.

When the earl of Ulster heard of this sudden revolution, he raised an army, and marched into the independent states of Connaught, to take advantage of its disorders. But the English deputy appears to have taken part with Manus O'Connor, and Fitz Gerald, with the king's forces, having joined him in Roscommon, they forbade the red earl to proceed any further. The latter is said to have bowed to this command, and to have retreated quietly from Connaught and dispersed his forces.

During the year following, the English were not very fortunate in the petty wars which desolated this province. In a battle between Manus O'Connor with his English allies, and O'Melachlin, the Irish titular king of Meath, the English suffered considerable loss, and their commander, Richard Tuite, was slain. O'Flynn, one of the chiefs of Connaught, was soon afterwards allured among the English, under pretence of contracting a matrimonial alliance, and treacherously slain by the De Burghs and the De Berminghams. And this was followed by a predatory excursion into Connaught, under De Bermingham, in which the English were defeated, and one of their chiefs, Meiler de Exeter, and a number of their men, were slain.

In 1290, besides the slaughter of O'Melachlin, the Irish king of Meath, a revolution shook each of the two great Irish kingdoms of the north. In Tyrone, the O'Neill who ruled the Kinel-Owen, was suddenly attacked by Donald, the son of Brian O'Neill, the former chief, who defeated and deposed him, and assumed the lordship himself. In Tirconnell, Hugh O'Donnell was similarly deposed by his brother Turlough O'Donnell, who usurped the chieftainship with the aid of the Scottish settlers. Early in the year following, the red earl proceeded against these two insurrections. He first marched into Tyrone, drove Donald O'Neill from the chieftainship, and restored the deposed ruler; but the earl had no sooner turned his back than Donald re-appeared in the field, and, having recovered his power, slew his rival. The earl, in the meanwhile, had marched into Tirconnell, expelled Turlough O'Donnell, plundered his country, "both clergy and people," and then proceeded to Elphin

in Connaught, where he took hostages of the inhabitants.

This latter province was also the scene of a new insurrection. After one or two private murders between the O'Connors, Cathal O'Connor (the deposed chief), with Niall O'Connor, and some others, raised an army, and were joined by some of the English, to depose Manus, whom they defeated in a battle, in which Manus himself was wounded and taken prisoner. The victors, instead of pursuing their first success with vigour, dispersed themselves over the district of Carbury in Sligo, where the battle had been fought, in search of plunder. The Siol-Murray and the English of Roscommon, had, in the meanwhile risen, and marched to the relief of Manus, and overtaking the insurgents laden with their plunder, they put them to flight, killing many, both Irish and English, and capturing all the booty. Among the English slain on this occasion were some of the family of the Mac Costellos. Manus recovered his liberty; and his rivals sought their safety in flight. During the remainder of this, and the year following (1292), the different members of the O'Connor family were satisfied with killing and plundering each other on a smaller scale. Among other family murders, Niall O'Connor, one of the leaders of the previous insurrection, was slain by his kinsman, Teige O'Connor. The red earl interfered again, and marched as far as Roscommon, but he soon withdrew without doing much damage, having received the tribute he claimed from Manus O'Connor.

In the beginning of 1293, Manus O'Connor, king of Connaught, died, and left his kingdom a prey to a new accumulation of disorders. Through the influence of the lord justice, William de Vesey, Hugh, a son of Owen O'Connor, was chosen to succeed him; but for some reason or other, which is not explained, on the tenth day after his appointment, Fitz Gerald with the English troops suddenly attacked him, slew many of his men, and made him his prisoner. Several murders followed this act of violence. Cathal O'Connor, who had formerly reigned and been deposed, was slain by Roderic O'Connor, who also slew young Cathal Ruadh O'Connor, only three months after he had been chosen by the people of Connaught to reign in place of the captive Hugh. Upon this, the lord justice liberated Hugh O'Connor, and restored him to the chieftainship.

At this moment the rivalry between the De Burghs and the Geraldines was again

paralyzing the action of the English government in Ireland. In 1290, king Edward, dissatisfied with the continual complaints which reached him against the disorders of that country, had appointed William de Vesey, to govern it, a lord then high in his favour, and who he believed possessed the talents and vigour necessary to restore tranquillity. The most distinguished of the Geraldines at this time was John fitz Thomas fitz Gerald, baron of Offaly, and earl of Kildare. De Vesey had married one of the coheiresses of the house of the Mareschals earls of Pembroke, and by her had become possessed of the territory of Kildare of which Fitz Thomas enjoyed the title. This seems to have added to the jealousy between them, and Fitz Thomas resisted the orders of the lord justice on various occasions, until the quarrel rose so high, that they accused each other mutually of treason and rebellion, and in 1293 both hurried to England to lay their complaints before the king. In his presence they burst into violent accusations of each other, and were not sparing of personal abuse; and on the second day of hearing, Fitz Thomas challenged De Vesey, as a traitor, to the combat. The combat was granted, the day fixed, and the lists prepared, but, after much delay and hesitation, it is said that De Vesey withdrew privately to France. Upon this, the king observing that, "though De Vesey had conveyed his person to France, he had left his lands behind him in Ireland," bestowed on Fitz Thomas the lordships of Kildare and Rathangan.

This success increased the pride and insolence of Fitz Thomas, who returned to Ireland to take his revenge on every one who, under the protection and favour of the lord justice, had dared to give him offence. The first grand object of his hostility was Richard de Burgh, the red earl, and he succeeded in taking him and his brother prisoners, and confined them in the strong castle of Ley. He next marched to Kildare, where a general rising had taken place among the Irish, who took the castle of Kildare, and burnt the archives of the county. Then, joining with the De Berminghams, he marched into Connaught against king Hugh O'Connor, who had destroyed his castle of Sligo, and made an attempt to depose him; but, not succeeding, he committed great devastation, and then withdrew with his plunder.

It was not till the year following that Fitz Thomas, at the command of the king

of England, set the earl of Ulster at liberty, after having required hostages as a security that he would not seek to avenge the injury. This feud was hardly pacified when new troubles broke out in the north. Brian O'Neill, who had recovered the sovereignty of Tyrone some time before, was suddenly attacked and slain by his rival Donald O'Neill, and many of the English and Irish who resisted the insurgents were slain. In Tirconnell the contest between the rival chieftains was more obstinate, and the whole country was ravaged and spoiled by the contending factions, until at length Turlough O'Donnell was deposed and driven into exile, and Hugh O'Donnell was received as chieftain in his place.

The English seem to have looked on unmoved during these disorders, and their attention was soon attracted by new convulsions in the kingdom of the restless O'Connors. In 1296, Hugh O'Connor was deposed by his own people, and Connor Ruadh O'Connor, the son of Cathal, was chosen in his place. The De Burghs hastened to the assistance of the deposed Hugh, and after a long series of depredations, in the course of which a great part of Connaught was again plundered and laid waste, a sanguinary battle was fought between the rival competitors for the chieftainship, and Connor Ruadh was defeated and slain. Hugh son of Owen O'Connor was again restored, and he retained the chieftainship of Connaught during several years, though not in peace.

King Edward appears to have been always anxious to apply a remedy to the disorders of Ireland, but his good intentions were thwarted by the turbulence of his subjects in that country, and his foreign wars and other matters of greater necessity hindered him from giving that force to them which would have assured their adoption. After the recall of De Vesey, an act that appears to have been called for by the personal feuds in which he had involved himself, the king appointed to the government of Ireland a man in whose talents and energies he appears to have placed the greatest confidence, and who did not deceive him in his expectations. Under John Wogan, Ireland, though still not without its troubles, enjoyed a degree of tranquillity to which it had been long unaccustomed. He began by inducing the Geraldines and De Burghs to agree to a truce of two years, and he applied himself incessantly to every measure likely to conciliate the great barons and compose the

differences which had so long existed among them. He then adopted the no less wise measure of calling together a parliament to consider of grievances, on the model of that which was now in the custom of assembling in England; and, as in that country, he issued writs not only to the lords spiritual and temporal, commanding them to attend, but to the sheriffs of the counties and liberties, directing each to return two knights. Although some declined to attend, and the assembly was not numerous, yet its acts are important as being the first step towards a redress of the abuses under which Ireland was suffering. These acts have been preserved in one of the constitutional records of Ireland.

John Wogan's parliament began by making some alterations in the divisions of counties, in order to facilitate and ensure the regular execution of the laws, which appears to have previously encountered some difficulties from the old divisions and limits. Its second ordinance enjoined that the lords who had charge of the castles on the borders of the Irish independent states, should remain in them to attend to the defence of the English territory, and not absent themselves from them and thus expose the Pale to invasion. The third article related to absentees; it was stated that by the absence of some lords of the soil in England, their tenantry were not trained and armed as they ought to be, but, on a sudden incursion of the Irish, were liable to be surprised in a defenceless state, and it was ordered that tenants of every degree should be obliged to provide according to their rank towards a military establishment, and that absentees should assign a sufficient portion of their Irish revenues for this purpose. It was ordered further that, in case of a sudden incursion of the Irish into a certain district, if the people of the adjoining districts neglected wilfully to go to the assistance of their neighbours thus invaded, the latter should be entitled to damages from them in proportion to their loss. To put a check on the private expeditions of the barons, a provision was made that, for the future, no lord should wage war without the license of the chief-governor or the special mandate of the king; and, to curb the power of the great lords, an effort was made to limit the number of their retainers, by forbidding every person of whatever degree to harbour a greater number of their idle men, or kerns, as they were called, than he could himself maintain, and he was made

answerable for all exactions or violence committed by them. It appears to have been a common practice with the Irish, when any particular district was the object of their hostilities, to make a truce for a certain time with the neighbouring settlements, that so they might have the less hindrance to their invasion, and they generally ended with attacking those who had consented to the truce. To obviate this evil, it was enacted that no truce should ever be made with the Irish which was not general and equal, and that those who made such separate truces should be looked upon as accomplices in the havoc which ensued and be treated accordingly. It was at the same time provided that the Irish themselves, when they had once concluded a fair and general truce, should not be molested by any insidious incursions or hostilities, which had frequently produced sanguinary reprisals. Further, to take away all excuse for remissness or inactivity in case of sudden invasion, it was decreed that from the moment any hostilities were commenced, the county or liberty attacked should without waiting for further orders rise in arms and maintain the war at their own proper charges, without intermission or suspension, till the enemy should be driven out, or till contrary orders were received from the chief governor. And, to deprive the enemy of their usual shelter, every lord was directed to repair and clear the roads through his forests, and to make bridges and pathways to facilitate the movements of the soldiers in pursuing the insurgents to their retreats. An old ordinance was likewise confirmed, which punished with forfeiture of goods and imprisonment, all Englishmen who, as a cloak for the gratification of their passions, should conform, in their mode of wearing their hair and in their garb, to the customs of the Irish, so to escape the penalties of the English law. Finally, two lords were appointed to each county and liberty in which Irishmen were resident, who, in the absence of the chief governor, should have full power to treat with the Irish, and make such agreements with them as might secure their district from disorder.*

It will be seen at once that the main object of these statutes was to guard against the constant hostility and discord to which Ireland had been subject during the earlier part of this reign; and that they were to a certain degree effective, is proved by the

* These statutes are abstracted by Leland from the Liber Niger, or Black Book, of Christ Church, Dublin.

unusual tranquillity of the island during the following years. This tranquillity appeared so well established, that the lord justice of Ireland was enabled to send large bodies of troops to the assistance of his sovereign in the various invasions of Scotland, and these troops were peculiarly suited for the warfare in which Edward was then engaged, from being so long accustomed to the wars on their own lakes and mountains. In the beginning of 1299, John Wogan led a considerable force of his Irish troops to join the royal standard in Scotland, who did great service, and were feasted magnificently at Roxburgh castle by the victorious monarch. During their absence, however, while the government was left in the hands of William de Ross prior of Kilmainham, the Irish in various parts broke out into open insurrection, and the people of the Maraghie mountains burnt Leighlin and other towns. This partial rising was soon suppressed, and the two chiefs of Orgial, in a similar attempt, were defeated and slain.

The kingdom of Connaught was not yet relieved of its internal disorders, which in the beginning of the fourteenth century broke out with renewed fury. About the same time Turlough O'Donnell was defeated and slain by his brother Hugh, who was accepted as his successor. This spirit of turbulence spread rapidly, and soon showed itself in the country of the O'Reillys, and in various other parts. Alarm was taken by the English government, and when, on the renewal of war in Scotland in 1303, the Earl of Ulster and Eustace le Poer conducted a large force out of Ireland to join king Edward's army, Edmund le Botiler, who was also summoned to attend in this service, no sooner reached Dublin prepared to embark, than the intelligence of insurrections became so alarming, that it was not thought advisable that he should leave the kingdom. By his absence from the king's army on this occasion, Edmund le Botiler gave great offence to Edward, but his anger was appeased, when the cause of his disobedience to the summons was explained.

Ireland at this moment seemed as though it were again falling into that state of petty disorder and outrage which had so long filled the chronicles with entries of individual slaying and plundering, and a number of disgraceful crimes of this kind now force themselves upon our attention, in which English and Irish seem equally implicated. In 1305, Murtogh O'Connor king of Offaly,

with his brother, and twenty-nine of the chiefs of his people, were treacherously slain in the house of Piers de Bermingham, at Carbery in the county of Kildare. The same year another great slaughter of the O'Reillys by the O'Connors took place; and, in the south, the seneschal of Wexford, Sir Gilbert Sutton, was put to death in the house of Hamo le Gras, who also narrowly escaped the same fate. In the year following, Turlough O'Brien, prince of Thomond, was also murdered; and Donald Ruadh, prince of Desmond, was slain by his own son, Daniel Oge mac Carthy.

In the year last mentioned Connaught was again involved in serious disorders, for some of the O'Connors, with a great many of the chiefs, rose against the reigning prince, Hugh O'Connor, and the two armies remained during four months on opposite sides of the Shannon, watching each other, and each plundering the country around. The English seem to have been restrained from taking an active part in this dispute. At length, having collected much booty, and having received a slight check, the insurgent army marched away with its booty, until it came to the ancient palace of the kings of Connaught at Cloon-Fraoich in Roscommon, still the chief residence of the O'Connors, which they plundered and burnt. The royal army had by this time overtaken them, and in an engagement in the neighbourhood, defeated them and deprived them of their booty. In Sligo, some of the O'Connors and other chiefs of Connaught plundered the district of Carbury, and then quarrelled and fought about the division of of the booty. About the same time the O'Dempsys made a great slaughter of the O'Connors near Geashill in Offaly. And soon after this, Piers de Bermingham was defeated by the Irish on the borders of Meath, and the town of Ballymore in Westmeath was burnt by the victors. By this defeat Leinster was exposed to the enemy, and the English were called from all parts to its defence. In a hard fought battle at Glenfell, the English, commanded by Sir Thomas Mandeville, overcame the invaders, though the result of the combat was long doubtful, and the English leader had his horse killed under him. One or two members of the O'Connor family murdered by their own kinsmen; a sudden rising of the O'Kellys, who slew a great number of the English in Roscommon; and the destruction of the castle of Geashill

by the wild mountaineers of Offally, who also burnt the town of Ley; are the chief events which in Ireland distinguished the last year of the reign of Edward I., who died on the seventh of July, 1307.

One of the bravest and most active of the English knights engaged in the continual and harrassing warfare on the English borders, was Piers de Bermingham of Athenry, lord of Carbery in Kildare and of other baronies, whose defeat in Meath in 1306 has been so carefully recorded in the native Irish chronicles. This man, whom the English annalists of Ireland describe as "a noble champion against the Irish," died in the April of 1308, and his death was lamented as a general loss to the English settlers. An English song, written on the occasion, has been preserved in a solitary manuscript of the time,* and presents us with another curious monument of popular feeling among the Anglo-Irish of the beginning of the fourteenth century. The English, it says, had reason to lament one of the best knights and noblest warriors of the age, one who let no "thief" have rest in any place where he came. The constant scenes of depredation which the preceding pages have placed before our eyes were, it must be acknowledged, sufficient to authorize either party in calling their enemies by the opprobrious name of thieves. Another good quality of this valiant knight, according to the song, was, that he was a foe to all Irishmen—"he was ever riding about to hunt them out by force, as a hunter doth the hare; for when they thought themselves most sure of having rest in the wilds where none could see them, then would he follow them up into their very hiding-places, wherever they might be. He would wake them out of their sleep, till they trembled with fear, and tried to skulk away. He took their heads as a pledge for the payment of their lodgings: such was the game he taught them."† The song then speaks

* The same which contains the Anglo-Norman song on the walling of New Ross, described in the last chapter, now MS. Harl. No. 913, in the British Museum.

† "Another thing also,
To Yrismen he was fo,
That wel wide whare.
Ever he rode aboute
With streinth to hunt ham ute,
As hunter doth the hare.
For whan hi wend best
In wildernis han rest,
That no man ssold ham se,

of a general confederacy among the Irish to destroy the English settlements, on which the earl of Ulster (the red earl), Edmund le Botiler, John fitz Thomas, and Piers de Bermingham joined in taking measures to oppose them, and all the knights of the English Pale agreed to meet them in arms on a certain day; but, as the songster pathetically complains, long before the day came, many of them forgot their engagement, and through their negligence the land was ruined and plundered:‡ Piers de Bermingham almost alone failed not in his duty. The defeat he sustained in 1306 was probably the event alluded to. This curious relic of early political minstrelsy then proceeds somewhat briefly to relate an incident which is not easily explained, but appears to be intended as a sample of Piers de Bermingham's liberality towards the household of the king of Connaught. King O'Connor, it says, brought his kerns, whose chief was named Gilboie, to Piers in Thetmoy, at the feast of the Trinity, "when hoods were best." Among many other chiefs who presented themselves on this occasion, was one named Ethemacmal More. "Sir Piers looked out, and saw such a multitude, he thought it no game." Nevertheless he received them all, and refused none; but he caused hoods to be made for them all, and every man went away satisfied, with the exception of one "wretch," who was so notorious for his villainy, that he was refused, and "went unhooded home."§

The year in which Piers de Bermingham died saw new insurrections in the kingdom of the O'Connors. A feud between the sons of Donald O'Connor and the Mac Dermotts

Than he wold drive a quest
Anon to har nest,
In stid ther hi wold be.
Of slep he wold ham wak,
For ferdnis he wold quak,
And fond to sculk awai.
For the hire of har bedde,
He tok har hevid to wedde,
And so he taght ham plai."

‡ "Lang er this dai was com,
Hit was forgit with som
That neisse beth to nede;
Alas! what ssold hi i-bor?
Throgh ham this lond is i-lor,
To spille ale and bred."

§ "O Konwir that was king,
His ketherin he gan bring,
The maister heet Gilboie,
Right at the Trinite,
Whan hodes ssold best be,
To Pers in Totomoye.

led to great disorders in Sligo, and in a battle at the beginning of 1309, the English of that district, who seem to have taken part with the Mac Dermotts, were defeated with some loss. Another feud between Hugh O'Connor, the son of Cathal, and his brother Roderic, in the course of which an O'Connor was slain, had been followed by a rebellion of the sons of Cathal O'Connor against Hugh, the son of Owen O'Connor, who at present ruled over that kingdom. In a battle in the wood of Cloghan, in Roscommon, king Hugh O'Connor was slain by Hugh Brefneach, the son of Cathal O'Connor, who was immediately received as king by the people of the Tuathas. But the Siol-Murray, who claimed the right of election, chose his brother Roderic for king of Connaught, and this chieftain marched into the plain of Roscommon with a large body of cavalry, and defeated his opponents there, who appear to have been supported by the English. It was in this battle, according to the Irish annals, that Piers de Bermingham was slain, though the song quoted above and the English annals do not say that he died in the field. Roderic's triumph was of short duration, for William de Burgh with a strong party of English and of Irish of the opposite party, having agreed to a conference with him at Athslisen in Roscommon, the meeting ended in a battle, in which Roderic was defeated with considerable loss. He retreated into Sligo, followed closely by De Burgh, who ravaged the country through which he passed, including a great part of Leitrim and Sligo, and drove Roderic apparently into Ulster. The war was carried on between the O'Connors and their partizans on a smaller scale during nearly a year, and Connaught appears to have remained virtually without a king, until Hugh Brefneach was treacherously murdered

by one of his own retainers, who, according to the Irish accounts, was bribed to commit this crime by William de Burgh. In a squabble two years afterwards the murderer was slain with the same "sharp axe" with which he committed the crime.

As soon as they received intelligence of Hugh's death, the confederates who were opposing him separated in search of plunder, William de Burgh entering the country of the Siol-Murray, where he exercised such tyranny that, to use the words of the Irish chronicler of these events, "there was no parish without oppression, nor no good man without great wrong done him, during the reign and government of William de Burgh after the death of Hugh Brefneach."

But William de Burgh, having effected the death of one king, appeared to be in no haste to elect another, and his Irish allies, who were chiefly the Mac Dermotts, began to entertain suspicions that the English baron had no other object than that of plundering and destroying the country. Accordingly, the chief of this clan, Maolrooney mac Dermott, brought forward his foster-son Feidlim, the son of Hugh, son of Owen O'Connor, and to make up by outward show for what was lost in regal power, he took him to the Carn-fraoich, in Roscommon, the ancient hill of inauguration of the kings of Connaught, and there he was installed king with the ceremonies and customs of the earlier times, which had not been observed in Connaught during several ages. After the ceremonies of the installation, Maolrooney made a magnificent coronation feast, "with the assembly and presence of all the nobility of Connaught, such as none of his predecessors, kings of Connaught, ever before him was heard or read in books to have made."

The period had now arrived when the appointment to the government of Ireland was sometimes considered at the court of England as an honorary name for banishment, a means of removing to a distance personages whom the sovereign dared not or was unwilling to subject to any less equivocal mark of his displeasure. The first example of this honorary banishment was Piers de Gaveston, the notorious favourite of Edward II., who, when the king was obliged to yield to the demand of his barons, that he should be banished from England, was appointed the king's lieutenant, and was invested with greater powers, and accompanied with more pomp, than any of the preceding governors. The king accompanied

And yite of other stoore
Com Ethemacmal More,
And other fale bi name;
Sire Pers lokid ute,
He seei such a rute,
Him thought hit nas no game.
Sire Pers ses ham com,
He receivid al and som,
Noght on i-wernd nas.
Sith hoodis he let mak,
Noght on nas forsak,
Bot al he did ham grace.
Save o wrech that ther was,
He cuthe noght red in place,
No sing what he com;
He was of Caymis kinne,
And he refusid him,
He wend unhodid hom."

him in person as far as Bristol, from whence the favourite sailed to Ireland in the summer of 1308.

The new governor of Ireland was not wanting in talents, and his government was remarkable for its activity. He was himself almost constantly in the field; and, instead of remaining in Dublin like many of his predecessors, who left the defence of the country to others, he marched out in person against the turbulent clans, drove them from their retreats, and pursued them till they were completely broken and dispersed. One of the more powerful of the Irish chiefs on the English borders, an O'Dempsey, venturing to oppose him in the field, was defeated and slain. He penetrated into Thomond, and there overcame the chieftain O'Brien, who had long set the English at defiance. Having thus reduced the province to tranquillity, he busied himself with building castles, and making roads and communications throughout the country under his command.

A formidable enemy, however, soon arose to embarrass the government of Piers de Gaveston, and that was the proud de Burgh of Ulster, the red earl. The earl of Ulster no doubt shared in all the jealousy of the English barons against this upstart and imperious favourite, and he showed no inclination to conceal it. While the lord lieutenant (a title now used for the first time) held his court in Dublin, the red earl kept a court no less numerous and magnificent in his princely castle of Trim, where he feasted the great barons of Ireland, and conferred the honour of knighthood on their sons. Gaveston could not fail to be mortified by this parade, and he expressed strongly his displeasure. The quarrel between the two great lords might have been carried to open hostilities, had not Piers de Gaveston been suddenly recalled from Ireland to be restored to king Edward's favour in the court of England.

His successor, John Wogan, was the man of parliaments and laws, who had several times held the office of lord justice of Ireland in the preceding reign. A parliament was held at Kilkenny soon after his arrival,

in which laws were passed to repress the insolence of the barons and to put an end to their unjust exactions. But their power and pride had now again risen to such a height, and their mutual feuds were so bitter, that it required something more powerful than the decrees of a local parliament to keep them in order. The old rivalry between the De Burghs and the Geraldines again broke out in hostilities, and in 1311, the proud earl of Ulster marched into Thomond to enforce with arms claims which he disdained to prove by law. But this overbearing nobleman was now at length humbled by a severe defeat which he experienced from the Geraldines under the command of Richard de Clare, and he was made prisoner with several adherents. The red earl was obliged to submit to the terms dictated by his enemies; but, when he was set at liberty, he agreed to cement a reconciliation between the two families, by marrying his daughters to Maurice and Thomas fitz John, the progenitors of the illustrious houses of Desmond and Kildare.

The year just mentioned was distinguished by disorders in almost every part of Ireland. In Thomond, its prince, Donough O'Brien, was basely murdered by one of his kinsmen, Murrough O'Brien, who usurped the chieftainship; and some other chieftains fell in mutual strife. In the English Pale, the troublesome sept of the mountains of Wicklow, the Byrnes and O'Tooles, had assembled in great force, attacked the towns of Taggard and Rathcoole, and advanced as far as the woods of Glendalory, from whence they threatened Dublin. The lord justice, John Wogan, was obliged, in the moment of danger, to turn his attention from these insurgents, in order to march with all the troops he could collect into Orgial, where a revolt of the English and Irish had broken out under Robert de Verdon. The lord justice was defeated by these English malcontents, and lost several of his officers in the battle. Such was the state of Ireland, when on the eve of a visitation which fell eventually with equal weight on the Irish population and on the English settlers.

CHAPTER VI.

INVASION OF IRELAND BY EDWARD BRUCE.



NO sooner had intelligence reached Ireland of the successes of the champion of Scottish independence, Robert Bruce, against the armies of the weak monarch who now filled the throne of England, than a spirit of revolt began to show itself in various parts of the island, but more especially among the people of Ulster, whose proximity to Scotland, and the relationship of blood between them and the inhabitants of the opposite coast, naturally led to a closer intimacy. Bruce himself, when driven from Scotland by the army of Edward I. in 1306, had found an asylum in the little island of Rachlin, off the coast of Antrim, where, with three hundred of his more faithful followers, he was supported by the islanders. On his return to Scotland in the ensuing spring, a strong party of the Irish of Ulster were sent over to his assistance, but they were defeated and nearly destroyed in the attempt to land on the coast of Galloway, and among the trophies of this victory carried to king Edward were the heads of two Irish chiefs.

It appears that the Irish of Ulster had been for some time in communication with the Scots when, after the victory of Bannockburn had established Robert Bruce on the Scottish throne, they sent deputies to him, inviting him to assist them in throwing off the English yoke, and offering to make his brother Edward king of Ireland. Bruce readily embraced the proposal, not only because it was an opportunity of weakening the power of his English enemies, but because it furnished him with the means of relieving himself from the uneasiness given him by the fierce ambition of his brother, who laid claim to one half of his kingdom of Scotland, and was hardly quieted by being declared heir-apparent to the throne.* Edward Bruce was so impatient to possess

this new crown presented to his view, that an attempt was made to raise his standard in Ulster before the plot was ripe, and a few Scottish boats attempted to land on the coast of Antrim, but they were driven back with loss.

This partial movement served, however, to excite the suspicions of the English government, and, although the danger seems to have been much underrated, the rulers at Dublin showed more activity than usual. Theobald de Vernon was at this moment lord justice of Ireland. Towards the winter of 1314, an ecclesiastic high in the confidence of the English monarch, named John de Hothum, came over to Ireland entrusted with full power to treat with the earl of Ulster and the other great barons on the state of that island, with a view to the redressing of grievances and the establishment of tranquillity. He also brought writs addressed to the different barons, ordering them to appoint a deputy for the government of Ireland during the absence of Theobald de Vernon, who was ordered, with the earl of Ulster and lord Edmund le Botiler, to repair to the king in England for the sake of consulting on the alarming posture of affairs. They returned to Ireland early in the following spring, Edmund le Botiler having been appointed to the office of lord justice.

On the 25th of May, 1315, Edward Bruce made his appearance on the coast of Antrim, with a fleet of three hundred vessels, from which he landed, at Larne, six thousand Scots. He was immediately joined by his partisans in the north of Ireland, and many, encouraged by his imposing force, were drawn into the confederacy, who might otherwise have looked on with coldness. The Scots, from the first, exhibited that barbarous ferocity which they had so often shown in their invasions of the north of England, and nothing escaped their ravages; the English in Ulster were slaughtered without

* The Scottish chronicler Fordun states distinctly that this was the real reason for the Irish expedition. "Iste Edwardus erat homo ferox, et magni cordis

valde, nec voluit cohabitare fratri suo in pace, nisi dimidium regnæ solus haberet: et hac de causa mota fuit guerra in Hibernia."

mercy, their castles thrown to the ground, and several of the most important towns plundered and burnt. The town of Dundalk was utterly destroyed; and the rage of the invaders was so great, that, when at Ardee, they found the church filled with men, women, and children, who had sought an asylum in the sacred edifice, they set fire to it, and burnt all who were within it. Edward Bruce, eager to obtain the title of king, seized the different revenues of Ulster, took its hostages, and, assembling the various Irish chiefs, he caused them to proclaim him king of Ireland, with the ceremonies which had formerly attended the installation of the native monarchs.

Whatever alarm the English government in Ireland may have felt, it appears certain that it did not contemplate an invasion of this formidable description, and that it had made no preparations to withstand it. The earl of Ulster—Richard the red earl—whose personal interests were most at stake in the north, was the first, in spite of his age, to take up arms. He assembled his retainers in Roscommon, and marching to Athlone, was there joined by Feidlim with the army of Connaught, who joined with the English to repel the invaders. As soon as they had crossed the border of Meath, they plundered and ravaged, in as ruthless a manner as their opponents, to punish the men of Ulster for the encouragement they had given to the enemy, and they thus laid waste the country in the whole course of their march, till they arrived at Coleraine and Inisowen in the extreme north. On their way, they were overtaken by the lord justice, Edmund le Botiler, with the forces of the English Pale; but the red earl, who had lost none of his proud and imperious spirit, refused their assistance, intimating angrily that he and his vassals were powerful enough to crush the Scots and their Irish allies, and recommending the deputy to return with his army, and look to the defence of Leinster. Edmund le Botiler, offended at the earl's rebuke, immediately returned to Dublin.

Meanwhile Bruce, having caused himself to be crowned king of Ireland at Knock-nemelan near Dundalk, had overrun the counties of Down, Armagh, and Louth, and entered Meath, now closely followed and harassed by the English, where he listened to the councils of his principal Irish associate, O'Neill of Tyrone, and retraced his steps into Ulster, where the earl had been ravaging O'Neill's territory. The Irish au-

thorities describe the two opposing armies as marching along side by side, separated only by the deep and wide waters of the Banne, obtaining from time to time a few harmless shots at each other with their bows and arbalests, and rivalling each other in the havoc they committed on the country through which they passed. Near Coleraine Edward Bruce determined to encamp, and wait for a reinforcement he expected from Scotland; but the earl of Ulster forced him into an engagement, in which, after a desperate contest, the English were defeated. Many of Richard de Burgh's followers were slain, and among the prisoners taken by the Scots were his brother William de Burgh, Sir John Mandeville, and Sir Alan fitz Alan. According to some authorities the Scots owed their victory to a stratagem; their loss was also too considerable to allow them immediately to follow up the victory. The red earl, humiliated by his check, was obliged to content himself with watching his enemies, and acting on the defensive. The Irish annalists say that he remained during the rest of the year "without force or power in any of the parts of Ireland."

Some of the Irish chroniclers ascribe the red earl's defeat to the defection of Feidlim O'Connor, with whom it is pretended that Bruce had already tampered. It is said that he had been obliged to separate himself from his English allies before the battle of Coleraine, in order to hasten back to Connaught, where his kinsman, Roderic O'Connor, had taken advantage of his absence to rise in rebellion against him; and, after having laid waste the lands of those who remained faithful in their allegiance to Feidlim, he went to the Carn-fraoich, and obliged the Siol-Murray to invest him with the sovereignty in all the solemnity used by the kings of Connaught. The English had now too much on their hands elsewhere to allow them to give any effectual assistance to their ally; but when Feidlim returned with his army, his friends and foster parents, the Mac Dermotts, with other clans, were encouraged, and joined him. With the assistance of a part of the English forces under John de Bermingham, he marched against the usurper, who was defeated and slain in a great battle. During the rest of the year his kingdom was desolated in the most terrible manner between the wanton barbarities of the two parties who had been struggling for the chieftainship. The Irish writers describe with horror how in this war of Irish

against Irish, "they killed infinite numbers of cattle and sheep; they even stripped gentlewomen, who could make no resistance, of their clothing to the skin, and turned them adrift naked; and they destroyed and killed children and little ones without remorse. There was not seen so much hurt done in those parts before in any man's memory, and that without profit to the doers of the harm. There was no respect of either temporal or ecclesiastical land in that country; cattle, corn, and other goods, were snatched even from the altars." The chronicler, at the end, sums up briefly the calamities of the year, by telling us that "there reigned many diseases generally throughout the whole kingdom, a great loss of the inhabitants, great scarcity of victuals and slaughter of people, and some ugly and foul weather."

When the province of Connaught was in some degree pacified, Feidlim O'Connor suddenly broke his alliance with the English, and declared in favour of Edward Bruce. Encouraged by the arrival of new troops from Scotland, the latter followed up his late success by laying siege to Carrickfergus, the strongest post of the English in the north. The spirit of insurrection had in the mean time spread into most parts of Ireland, and led to the wildest outbreaks. The Irish of Thomond burnt the castle of Athlone; other towns suffered a similar fate, and three castles in Connaught belonging to the earl of Ulster were destroyed by Cathal Ruadh O'Connor, one of the chiefs of that province.

Not only did the great mass of the Irish join with the enemy, but disaffection was found even among the English themselves; and as the danger approached nearer, it was thought necessary to make a public declaration of fidelity to the English government, and this was signed by the great mass of the Irish barons, who state therein that "the Scottish enemies had drawn over to them all the Irish of Ireland, several of the great lords and many English people." To encourage them in their loyalty, several of them received special marks of the royal favour. John fitz Thomas was created earl of Kildare, and Edmund le Botiler, the lord justice, received the title of earl of Carrick.

Among the English barons who wavered in their allegiance on this occasion were the De Lacys. After Bruce had received the reinforcements he expected from Scotland, he left some troops to carry on the siege of Carrickfergus, and marched with his army

into Meath, where, through the treachery of the De Lacys, the English were again defeated with great slaughter. The conqueror kept his Christmas in regal style at a place near Loughsudy, which he burnt, and then marched into Kildare. At the Moate of Ascul near Athy he encountered an English army under the lord justice, accompanied with John fitz Thomas, Arnold le Poer, and other lords and gentlemen of Leinster and Munster; but the English, owing to some misunderstandings among their leaders, were again defeated. Soon after this success, however, Edward Bruce returned into Ulster, and established his head-quarters at Northburg castle, where he kept his court and made an ostentation of his royalty by taking cognizance of pleas.

The English, meanwhile, were sufficiently occupied nearer the seat of government by the restless spirit of their Irish neighbours. The mountain clans of Wicklow had again descended into the plains, and after having burnt the town of Wicklow and laid waste the country, they carried their depredations almost to the walls of Dublin. The lord justice prudently concentrated his forces in this quarter, and was thus enabled to take such severe vengeance on the depredators, that they were soon reduced to a condition to give no further uneasiness. O'Brien of Thomond, and other chieftains of Munster and Meath, revolted against the English. On the borders of Connaught, Feidlim O'Connor, who was now eager to show his zeal in the same cause, made several bold and successful irruptions into the English territory, in which he committed great havoc, and slew Stephen de Exeter, Miles de Cogan, William Prendergast, and several other knights and men of distinction.

The career of Feidlim was, however, of brief duration. Encouraged by his successes in plundering, he raised a formidable army, in the flattering hope that he was going to drive the English out of Connaught. The latter, also, had not been idle, for an army under William de Burgh and Richard de Bermingham was already advancing against him, and the two armies met at Athenry in Galway, on the feast of St. Lawrence the Martyr (the 10th of August, 1316). After a desperate and prolonged struggle, the Irish were totally defeated, with the slaughter, according to the Irish accounts, of eleven thousand of their men. The native annalists describe it as the most sanguinary engagement that had occurred since

the time when the English first landed in the island. King Feidlim, who was only in his twenty-third year, fell on the field of battle, and so many of the chiefs of Connaught were slain around him, that, some Irish writers pretend there was only one of the family of the O'Connors left of an age to be eligible to the throne. It was the last blow to their power. The victors appointed Roderic O'Connor, the son of Donough, to the chieftainship, and then marched into Roscommon to plunder and devastate the country of the turbulent Siol-Murray. After their departure, the Mac Dermotts arose, and deposed Roderic; and at the beginning of 1317 they elected Turlough, the son of Hugh O'Connor for their king.

During the long inactivity of Edward Bruce in the north, the English had begun to resume courage, and they gained several important advantages against the Irish. William de Burgh and John de Bermingham defeated the Irish in Connaught in another decisive battle towards the end of the year; and the Scots themselves experienced a defeat in Ulster from the English under John Loggan and Hugh Bisset, who slew a considerable number of the enemy, and sent many prisoners to Dublin, among whom were sir Alan Stewart and sir John Sandale. But the arrival of Robert Bruce from Scotland, who came with a large force to join his brother, raised the spirits of the invaders, and they prepared again to leave their exhausted quarters in Ulster, to seek richer plunder in the south. Their northern conquests were further secured by the capture of Carrickfergus, which, after its garrison had during a brave defence of several months been reduced to the greatest extremities, was at length compelled to surrender on condition that their lives should be saved. Their privations and suffering were so great, that they are said to have been reduced to eat the hides of beasts, and even to have devoured the bodies of eight Scots whom they had made prisoners.

The Scottish army now assembled on the Irish soil under the two Bruces is said to have amounted to twenty thousand men, independent of the horde of less disciplined Irish auxiliaries. With this formidable force they now marched again to the south, burning and destroying more ruthlessly even than in the preceding year, and committing everywhere the most horrible atrocities. They proceeded first to Slane, and from thence to the immediate neighbourhood of Dublin,

where they took Castleknock, and made Hugh Tyrrel, its lord, their prisoner.

The citizens of Dublin, under their mayor, Robert de Nottingham, exhibited on this occasion far more energy than the barons of the Pale. When they heard that the Scots were approaching against them, they prepared courageously for the defence of their city. The inactivity of the earl of Ulster having given rise to some suspicions that he also was in league with the enemy, the city officers proceeded to St. Mary's abbey near Dublin, where the red earl was then living in retirement, and there arrested him and committed him to prison in Dublin castle. Some of the earl's servants are said to have been killed in the fray which attended this arrest, and, in their rage against the monks who were also suspected of favouring the enemy, the citizens pillaged the abbey and committed it to the flames, by which it was partly burnt down. They next set fire to their suburbs, in order that they might not afford a harbour for the enemy, and in the conflagration several of the churches were destroyed, and even the venerable cathedral caught fire and was partly burnt.

The unwieldy army which was now scattered over the plains of Leinster was ill calculated for undertaking the siege of a large and strongly walled city like Dublin. Laying waste the country as it proceeded, and consuming everything as it went on, it could not stop in its course without immediately suffering from the famine which it created. Urged on probably by this necessity, and guided by Walter de Lacy, who, after having renewed his oath of fealty to the king of England in the most solemn manner, had immediately broken it on the approach of the enemy, the Scottish leader marched from before Dublin, where he had remained but a few days, and, after encamping for a short time with his devouring hordes amid the beautiful scenery of Leixlip, proceeded to Naas. From thence the Scots marched into the county of Kilkenny, and then proceeded to the neighbourhood of Limerick, which Edward Bruce seems to have intended to occupy as a central position between Munster and Connaught, and whither he had probably been called by Donough O'Brien, an aspirant to the chieftainship of Thomond. But Murtogh O'Brien, the ruling prince, was faithful to the English, and not only did Limerick show itself prepared for a siege, but a large army of English and Irish

was collecting behind it to attack the invaders. The Scottish army, although it had met with no resistance, had suffered considerably in its march, and famine, created by the horrible destruction it had made, added to the inclemency of the season, was already making fearful havoc in its ranks. Immense numbers of the Scottish soldiers had perished, and those who remained were reduced as a last resource to feed upon their own horses. Under these circumstances, the two Bruces found themselves compelled in the beginning of May, 1317, to resolve upon a precipitate retreat, through the very country they had so improvidently wasted, to their old quarters in Ulster, whence at least they could communicate with Scotland.

They were allowed to make their retreat without molestation, owing to the extraordinary inactivity of the English leaders, who, instead of attacking their enemies, while in the weak condition to which they were now reduced, were spending their time in idle consultations in parliaments held at Kilkenny and Dublin, though an army estimated at no less than thirty thousand men were waiting, under Edmund le Botiler and the earl of Kildare, for orders to take the field. In the Easter week, a new lord justice, Roger de Mortimer, afterwards earl of March, arrived at Youghall with a strong body of experienced soldiers, but, when he heard of the retreat of the Scots, he dismissed to their homes the large body of volunteers who had assembled for active operations, and, proceeding to Dublin, he held a parliament to consider of the case of the earl of Ulster, who was still held a prisoner by the citizens, in spite of a writ of mainprise which had been issued for his discharge. He was now, however, liberated, but he was required to give hostages and to take an oath of the most solemn kind, that he would not injure the citizens in revenge for his imprisonment. Measures were at the same time taken to bring to account and punish the English traitors who had notoriously assisted the invaders. Adam de Northampton, bishop of Ferns, was accused of having furnished them with men, arms, and provisions, and a writ was issued in August for his arrest. The De Lacys set the lord justice at defiance; and when he sent Sir Hugh Crofts, a knight of high repute, to summon them to attend his court, they seized the messenger and put him to death. Enraged at this act of savage barbarity, Roger de Mortimer marched against them with an army, laid

waste their lands and slew many of their followers, drove them into Connaught, and then proclaimed them traitors and outlaws. John de Lacy was subsequently captured, and, after having been detained sometime a prisoner, refusing to plead to the indictment against him, he was condemned to be pressed to death.

In spite of the famine which now prevailed throughout the island to such a degree, that we are told the wretched inhabitants were reduced to the necessity of eating one another, and that they even dug up the dead from their newly made graves, the Irish in different parts of the island were engaged as usual in war with one another. The two contending parties in Connaught ended their quarrel in a desperate battle, in which no less than four thousand men were slain. After this destructive engagement, Turlough O'Connor was deposed from the chieftainship, and was compelled to fly for protection to the De Burghs, while his victorious rival Cathal O'Connor usurped the sovereignty.

The Scots, meanwhile, remained quiet in Ulster, where Robert Bruce had left his brother to exercise his new and precarious sovereignty alone. The privations and suffering of his army in its way to the south, and in its retreat, had reduced it to no more than three thousand men, and the Irish allies had probably all left him in his march. With supplies from Scotland, assisted by an early and abundant harvest in all parts which had not been wasted by the war, he had sufficiently refreshed his men to be able again to take the field in the spring of 1318, and, joined probably by the Irish of Ulster, with the three De Lacys serving under his banner, the Scottish leader again marched to Dundalk on his way towards the south, where, within the few months which had passed since his retreat in the former year, three successive deputies had been appointed, William fitz John, archbishop of Cashel, who succeeded Roger de Mortimer, having now been himself replaced by Alexander Bickner, archbishop of Dublin.

As soon as intelligence of the movements of the Scots reached Dublin, an English army was despatched to meet them, under the command of John de Bermingham, accompanied by the archbishop of Armagh, who went to give counsel to the living and consolation to the dying. When they approached Dundalk, they found that the Scottish army was posted on the Faughard, a hill about two miles from that town. The

numbers on each side, in the battle which followed, are so differently stated by the Scottish and English writers, that they cannot be given with any certainty. The fate of the Scots was decided by the death of their leader soon after the armies engaged; and the English revenged the sufferings which had been inflicted upon them in a terrible slaughter of their enemies. After the battle, the body of Edward Bruce was found stretched on the ground in the midst of the slain, and over him was extended that of John Maupas, a brave English knight, by whose hand he fell. The victors cut off the head of the self-made king of Ireland, which was sent by John de Bermingham to king Edward, who in return conferred upon that baron the earldom of Louth, and the manor of Atherdee. The body of Bruce was cut into quarters, which were sent to be exposed to public view in different parts of the country. His brother Robert came with reinforcements, to hear of this disaster, and to return. Even the Irish rejoiced at the death of "the man who destroyed the people of Ireland in general, both English and Irish;" and their sufferings are seen in the declaration of the native Irish chroniclers, that "there was not a better deed that redounded more to the good of the kingdom, done in Ireland since the creation of the world, than the killing of Edward Bruce, for there reigned scarcity of victuals, breach of promises, ill performances of covenants, and the loss of men and women, throughout the whole kingdom, for the space of three years and a half that he bore sway, insomuch that men did commonly eat one another for want of sustenance during his time."

The disasters of the Scottish invasion seem to have left the spirits of the Irish almost broken during several years, and the chroniclers record little more than a list of deaths and murders. Donald O'Neill, the chief of Tyrone, who had been distinguished as the enemy of the English, and had been chiefly instrumental in calling in

Edward Bruce, was deposed by John de Bermingham, but, after the departure of the English, he recovered his power, though, in the feud between him and the O'Neill who had been substituted for him, he lost his son, the heir to the chieftainship. In 1320, Connaught was thrown into disorder by the feuds between the O'Connors and the Mac Dermotts, and Hugh O'Connor, the heir to the throne, was slain. An O'Brien, heir to the chieftainship of Desmond, was slain in a similar feud, about the same time. In 1321, Roderic O'Connor, who had been elected to the chieftainship of Connaught after the death of Feidlim, was slain by Cathal O'Connor; a quarrel among the O'Hanlons of Armagh, led to the slaughter of one of their chiefs by the English of Dundalk; and the O'Connors of Offaly, who had risen in arms, were defeated with considerable slaughter by the English of Meath under Andrew de Bermingham. The year following was marked by sanguinary wars between the O'Ferralls of Anally, and between the Mac Guires of Fermanagh; a new contest arose between the O'Connors and the Mac Dermotts; and the English in Thomond sustained a defeat by the chief of that district, Brian O'Brien. Several such feuds occurred in different parts during the year 1323, in consequence of one of which the English invaded the clan of the O'Ferralls. In 1324, Cathal O'Connor, king of Connaught, was slain by his kinsman Turlough O'Connor, who, after some opposition from others of the family, possessed himself of the sovereignty. This was followed by new feuds between the O'Rourkes and the O'Reillys in Breffny, between the O'Neills in Tyrone, and between the O'Briens in Thomond. War broke out in Desmond in 1326, between the Mac Carthys and the Geraldines, in which the English sustained a defeat. These are the chief events recorded in the Irish annals during the latter years of the reign of Edward II.

CHAPTER VII.

CONDITION OF THE ENGLISH PALE; THE LADY ALICE KYTELER AND THE BISHOP OF OSSORY.



THE annals of this period give us very little information on the internal condition of the English pale, but an event occurred there, in one of the years last mentioned, which, though of no great importance in itself, deserves to be related at length, on account of the light it casts on Anglo-Irish manners in the reign of Edward II., and as exhibiting the obstructions of every description that the rich and powerful threw in the way of the equal administration of justice. The event to which we allude merged into feuds between people of some importance, and caused much agitation throughout the English pale during several years.

Towards the latter end of the thirteenth century, Kilkenny had become one of the most important towns in the south of Ireland; it was defended by a strong castle, and inhabited by wealthy merchants, among whom was a rich banker and money-lender, named William Outlawe. This man married a lady of property of the neighbourhood, named Alice Kyteler, or Le Kyteler, who was probably the sister, or a near relative, of a William Kyteler, who is incidentally mentioned as holding the office of sheriff of the liberty of Kilkenny. William Outlawe died sometime before 1302; and his widow became the wife of Adam le Blond of Callan, of another family which held landed property in this part of the country. This second husband was dead before 1311; for, in that year, the lady Alice appears as the wife of Richard de Valle, and at the period of the events we are now to relate, she was the wife of a fourth husband, Sir John le Poer, a member of a family which had become one of the most powerful in this part of Ireland.* By her first husband she had a son, named also William Outlawe, who

appears to have been the heir to his father's property, and succeeded him as a banker; he was his mother's favourite child, and seems to have inherited also a good portion of the wealth of the lady Alice's second and third husbands.

The few incidents which can be gathered from the entries on the Irish records relating to this family previous to the year 1324, seem to show that it was deeply imbued with the turbulent spirit so prevalent among the Anglo-Irish in this age. It appears that in 1302, Adam le Blond and Alice his wife intrusted to the keeping of her son, William Outlawe the younger, three thousand pounds in money, a very large sum at that time, which William Outlawe, for the better security, buried in the earth within his house, a method of concealing treasures very common in past times. This was some way or other noised abroad; and one night the lady's presumed kinsman, William de Kyteler the sheriff of Kilkenny, with others, by precept of the seneschal of the liberty of Kilkenny, broke into the house *vi et armis*, as the record describes it, dug up this money, and carried it away, along with a hundred pounds belonging to William Outlawe himself, which they found in the house. Such an outrage as this could not pass in silence; but the perpetrators attempted to shelter themselves under the plea that, being dug up from the ground, the money came under the title of *treasure-trove*, and as such belonged to the king, and when Adam le Blond and his wife Alice attempted to make good their claims, the sheriff trumped up a charge against them that they had committed homicide and other crimes, and that they had concealed Roesia Outlawe (perhaps the sister of William Outlawe the younger), accused of theft, from the agents of justice, under which pretences he threw into prison all three, Adam, Alice, and Roesia. They were, however, soon afterwards liberated, but we

* There appears to have been jealousies at the beginning of the fourteenth century between the Poers, or Powers, and the citizens of Waterford. The early manuscript from which the poem on the walling of New Ross and the song on the death of Piers de

Bermingham are taken, contained, in a part now lost, another curious English song, warning the "young men of Waterford" against their warlike neighbours the Poers or Powers, and relating probably to some feud now forgotten.

do not learn if they recovered their money.* William Outlawe's riches, and his mother's partiality for him, appear to have drawn upon both the jealousy and hatred of their neighbours, and even of some of their kindred, but they were too powerful and too highly connected to be reached in any ordinary way. Circumstances, however, furnished the opportunity of raising against them a persecution of a new and extraordinary kind.

It was at this period that the subject of sorcery and magic had been much canvassed on the continent of Europe, and that, by a decree of pope John XXII., these imaginary crimes had been taken from the civil power, and placed, under the denomination of heresies, in the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court. A sudden measure like this naturally impressed a greater importance on the crimes themselves, and caused

* A petition for redress of wrongs by a widow of this family in the reign of Edward I., of which the following translation is printed by Leland, gives a strange picture of the evils of these times as well as of the turbulent character of the Irish prelates.

"Margaret le Blunde, of Cashel, petitions our lord the king's grace, that she may have her inheritance which she recovered at Clonmell before the king's judges, &c., against David Mae Mackerwait, bishop of Cashel.

"Item, the said Margaret petitions redress on account that her father was killed by the said bishop.

"Item for the imprisonment of her grandfather and grandmother, whom he shut up and detained in prison until they perished by famine, because they attempted to seek redress for the death of their son, father of your petitioner, who had been killed by the said bishop.

"Item, for the death of her six brothers and sisters, who were starved to death by the said bishop, because he had their inheritance in his hands at the time he killed their father.

"And it is to be noted, that the said bishop had built an abbey in the city of Cashel, on the king's lands granted for this purpose, which he hath filled with robbers, who murder the English, and depopulate the country; and that when the council of our lord the king attempts to take cognizance of the offence, he fulminates the sentence of excommunication against them.

"It is to be noted also, that the aforesaid Margaret has five times crossed the Irish sea. Wherefore, she petitions, for God's sake, that the king's grace will have compassion, and that she may be admitted to take possession of her inheritance.

"It is further to be noted, that the aforesaid bishop hath been guilty of the death of many other Englishmen, besides that of her father.

"And that the aforesaid Margaret hath many times obtained writs of our lord the king, but to no effect, by reason of the influence and bribery of the said bishop.

"She further petitions, for God's sake, that she may have costs and damages, &c."

them to be much more talked of among the mass of the people. The inhabitants of Kilkenny, unable to account otherwise for the riches of William Outlawe, came to the conclusion that he and his mother dealt in witchcraft.

At this time Richard de Ledrede, a turbulent intriguing prelate, held the see of Ossory, to which he had been consecrated in 1318 by mandate from the pope just mentioned, the same to whom we owe the first bull against sorcery,* which was the groundwork of the inquisitorial persecutions of the following ages. In 1324, bishop Richard made a visitation of his diocese, which had suffered considerably from the invasion of the Scots, and "found," as the chroniclers of these events inform us, "by an inquest in which were five knights and other men of distinction in great multitude, that in the city of Kilkenny there had long been, and still were, many sorcerers using divers kinds of witchcraft, to the investigation of which the bishop proceeding, as he was obliged by duty of his office, found a certain rich lady, called the lady Alice Kyteler, the mother of William Outlawe, with many of her accomplices, involved in various such heresies." Here, then, was a fair occasion for displaying the zeal of a follower of the sorcery-hating pope John, and also perhaps for indulging other passions.

The persons accused as lady Alice's accomplices, were her son the banker William Outlawe, a clerk named Robert de Bristol, John Galrussyn, William Payn of Boly, Petronilla de Meath, Sarah the daughter of Petronilla, Alice the wife of Henry the Smith, Annota Lange, Helena Galrussyn, Sysok Galrussyn, and Eva de Brounstoun. The charges brought against them were distributed under seven formidable heads. First, it was asserted that, in order to give effect to their sorcery, they were in the habit of denying totally the faith of Christ and of the church for a year or month, according as the object to be attained was greater or less, so that during the stipulated period they believed in nothing that the church believed, and abstained from "worshipping the body of Christ," from entering a church, from hearing mass, and from participating in the sacrament. Second, that they offered to the demons sacrifices of living animals, which they divided, member from member, and offered, by scattering them at a cross road, to a certain demon who caused himself to be

* "Contra magos magicasque superstitiones."

called Robert Artisson (*filius Artis*), who was "one of the poorer class of hell." Third, that by their sorceries they sought counsel and answers from demons. Fourth, that they used profanely the ceremonies of the church in their nightly conventicles, pronouncing, with lighted candles of wax, sentence of excommunication, even against the persons of their own husbands, naming expressly every member, from the sole of the foot to the top of the head, and at length extinguishing the candles with the exclamation, "Fi! fi! fi! Amen." Fifth, that with the intestines and other inner parts of cocks which had been sacrificed to demons, with "certain horrible worms," various herbs, the nails of dead men, the hair, brains, and clothes of children which had died unbaptised, and other things equally disgusting, boiled in the skull of a certain robber who had been beheaded, on a fire made of oak-sticks, they had made powders and ointments, and also candles of fat boiled in the said skull, with certain charms, which things were to be instrumental in exciting love or hatred, and in killing and otherwise afflicting the bodies of faithful christians, and in effecting various other purposes. Sixth, that the sons and daughters of the four husbands of the lady Alice Kyteler had made their complaint to the bishop that she, by such sorcery, had procured the death of her husbands, and had so infatuated and charmed them, that they had given all their property to her and her son, to the perpetual impoverishment of their own sons and heirs; inasmuch that her present husband, Sir John le Poer, was reduced to a most miserable state of body by her powders, ointments, and other magical operations; but being warned by her maid-servant, he had forcibly taken from his wife the keys of her boxes, in which he found a bag filled with the "detestable" articles above enumerated, which he had sent to the bishop. Seventh, that there was an unholy connexion between the said lady Alice and the demon called Robert Artis-

son, who sometimes appeared to her in the form of a cat, sometimes in that of a black shaggy dog, and at other times in the form of a black man, with two tall and equally swarthy companions, each carrying an iron rod in his hand.* The character of some of these charges would seem to imply that there was ground for suspicion that the lady Alice was implicated in that dark system of poisoning which prevailed so extensively in the middle ages, and which was often concealed under the name of witchcraft. Be this as it may, it is evident that the conspiracy against her had taken a very formidable character, and that, at first, her chief enemies lay among her own kindred.

The bishop of Ossory resolved at once to enforce in its utmost rigour the recent papal bull against offenders of this class; but he had to contend with greater opposition than he expected. The mode of proceeding was in itself new, for hitherto in England sorcery was looked upon as a crime of which the secular law had cognizance, and not as belonging to the ecclesiastical court; and this is said to have been the first trial of the kind in Ireland that had attracted any public attention. Moreover, the lady Alice, who was the person chiefly attacked, had rich and powerful supporters, who had probably hitherto shielded her against the malice of her enemies.

The first step taken by the bishop was to require the chancellor to issue a writ for the arrest of the person accused. But it happened that the lord chancellor of Ireland at this time was Roger Outlawe, prior of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, and a kinsman of William Outlawe. This dignitary, in conjunction with Arnold le Poer, seneschal of Kilkenny, expostulated with the bishop, and tried to persuade him to drop the suit. When, however, the latter refused to listen to them, and persisted in demanding the writ, the chancellor informed him that it was not customary to issue a writ of this kind, until the parties had been regularly proceeded

towards the doores of hir sonne William Outlawe, murmuring secretlie with hir selfe these words:—

"To the house of William my sonne,
Hie all the wealthe of Kilkennie towne;"

and that in her house was seized a wafer of consecrated bread, on which the name of the devil was written.

This is a curious picture of the inventions of popular jealousy, in a superstitious age, against fellow townsmen who, by superior talents, industry, or cunning, had made themselves much richer than their neighbours.

* Some of the old chroniclers, alluding to the apparent cause of the persecution to which this lady was exposed, add to the above list of offences, that the offering made by Lady Alice to the demon was nine red cocks and nine peacocks' eyes, and that it was offered at a certain stone bridge at a cross road; that she had a certain ointment with which she rubbed a beam of wood "called a cowltre," upon which she and her accomplices were carried to any part of the world they wished, without hurt or stoppage; that "she swept the stretes of Kilkennie betweene compleine and twilight, raking all the filth

against according to law. The bishop replied in a heat, that the service of the church was above the forms of the law of the land; but the chancellor now turned a deaf ear, and thereupon the bishop, taking the affair entirely into his own hands, sent two apparitors with a formal attendance of priests to the house of William Outlawe, where Lady Alice (who was perhaps separated from her husband) was residing, to cite her in person before his court. The lady, following the advice of her friends, refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court in this case; and, on the day she was cited to make her appearance, the chancellor, Roger Outlawe, sent advocates, who publicly pleaded her right to defend herself by her counsel, and not to appear in person. The bishop, regardless of this plea, pronounced against her the sentence of excommunication, and cited her son William Outlawe to appear on a certain day, and answer to the charge of harbouring and concealing his mother in defiance of the authority of the church.

On learning this, the seneschal of Kilkenny, Arnald le Poer, repaired to the priory of Kells, where the bishop was lodged, and made a long and touching appeal to him to mitigate his anger, until at length, wearied and provoked by his obstinacy, he left his presence with threats of vengeance. The next morning, as the bishop was departing from the priory to continue his visitation in other parts of the diocese, he was stopped at the entrance of the town of Kells by one of the seneschal's officers, Stephen le Poer, with a body of armed men, who conducted him as a prisoner to the castle of Kilkenny, where he was kept in close custody until the day was past on which William Outlawe was cited to appear in his court. This was, certainly, a method of evading the forms of law which is characteristic of a country and age where force was the most effective proof of right. The bishop, after many protests on the indignity offered in his person to the church, and on the protection given to sorcerers and heretics, was obliged to submit. His friends believed that the king's officers were bribed by William Outlawe's wealth; and it was afterwards reported, to throw discredit on the motives of the seneschal, that one of the guards was heard to say to another, as they led the bishop to prison, "That fair steed which William Outlawe presented to our lord sir Arnald last night draws well, for it has already drawn the bishop to prison!"

The quarrel now, if not before, was carried from the lady and her enemies to the bishop and the seneschal. The summary character of his proceeding against an ecclesiastic, appears to have caused astonishment even in Ireland, and, during the first day, multitudes of people of all classes visited the bishop in his confinement, to feed and comfort him, the general ferment increasing with the discourses he pronounced to his visitors. When informed of this, the seneschal ordered him to be more strictly confined, and forbade the admission of any visitors except a few of the prelate's particular friends, and his servants. The bishop now placed the whole diocese under an interdict. On the other side, it was necessary to prepare immediately some excuse for these proceedings, and the seneschal issued a proclamation, calling upon all who had any complaints to make against the bishop of Ossory to come forward; and at an inquest held before the justices itinerant, many grievous crimes of the bishop were rehearsed, but no man had the courage personally to charge him with them. All these circumstances, however, show that the bishop was not faultless; and that his conduct would not bear a very close examination is evident from the fact, that on more than one occasion, in subsequent times, he was obliged to shelter himself under the protection of the king's pardon for all past offences.

William Outlawe now went to the archives of Kilkenny, and there found a former deed of accusation against the bishop of Ossory for having defrauded a widow of the inheritance of her husband. The bishop's party said that it was a cancelled document, the case having been taken out of the secular court; and that William had had a new copy made to conceal the evidence of this fact, and had then rubbed the fresh parchment with his shoes in order to give his copy the appearance of an old document. It was, however, delivered to the seneschal, who now offered to liberate his prisoner on condition of his giving sufficient bail to appear and answer in the secular court the charge thus brought against him. This the bishop refused to do, and after he had remained eighteen days in confinement, he was unconditionally set free.

The bishop marched from his prison in triumph, full dressed in his pontifical robes, and immediately cited William Outlawe to appear before him in his court on another day. But before that day arrived, he received a royal writ, ordering him to appear

before the lord justice of Ireland without any delay, on penalty of a fine of a thousand pounds, to answer to the king for having placed his diocese under interdict, and also to make his defence against the accusations of Arnald le Poer. He received a similar summons from the dean of St. Patrick's, to appear before him as the vicarial representative of the archbishop of Dublin. The bishop of Ossory made answer that it was not safe for him to undertake the journey, because his way lay through the lands and lordship of his enemy, Sir Arnald; but this excuse was not admitted, and the diocese was relieved from the interdict.

Other trials were in reserve for the mortified prelate. On the Monday after the octaves of Easter, Arnald le Poer, as seneschal of the liberty, held his court of justice in the judicial hall of the city of Kilkenny, and there the bishop of Ossory resolved to present himself and invoke publicly the aid of the secular power to his assistance in seizing the persons accused of sorcery. The seneschal forbade him to enter the court on his peril; but the bishop persevered, and "robed in his pontificals, carrying in his hands the body of Christ (the consecrated host) in a vessel of gold," and attended by a numerous body of monks and clergy, he entered the hall and forced his way to the tribunal. The seneschal received him with reproaches and insults, and caused him to be ignominiously turned out of court. At the repeated protest, however, of the offended prelate, and the intercession of some influential persons there present, he was allowed to return, and the seneschal ordered him to take his place at the bar allotted for criminals, upon which the bishop cried out that Christ had never been treated so before since he stood at the bar before Pontius Pilate. He then called upon the seneschal to cause the persons accused of sorcery to be arrested and delivered into his hands, and, upon his refusal to do this, he held open the book of the Decretals and said, "You, sir Arnald, are a knight, and instructed in letters, and that you may not have the plea of ignorance in this place, we are prepared here to show in these Decretals that you and your officials are bound to obey my order in this respect under heavy penalties." The only reply which the seneschal condescended to make was, "Go to the church with your Decretals, and preach there, for here you will not find an attentive audience." The bishop then read aloud the names of the offenders, and the crimes

imputed to them, summoned the seneschal to deliver them up to the arm of the church, and retreated from the court.

Sir Arnald le Poer, and his friends, had not been idle, and the bishop was now cited to defend himself against various charges to be brought against him in the parliament about to be held in Dublin, while the lady Alice indicted him for defamation in a secular court. The bishop is represented as having narrowly escaped plots against his life on his way to Dublin, where he found the Irish prelates not much inclined to advocate his cause, because they looked upon him as a foreigner and an interloper, and he was even spoken of as "a truant monk from England," who came thither to represent the "island of saints" as a nest of heretics, and to plague them with papal bulls of which they never heard before. It was, however, thought expedient to stand up outwardly for the credit of the church, and some of the more influential of the Irish ecclesiastics interfered to effect a reconciliation between the seneschal and the bishop of Ossory.

After encountering new obstacles and repeated disappointments, the bishop at length obtained the necessary power to bring the alleged offenders to a trial, and most of them were imprisoned; but the chief object at which he aimed, the lady Alice, had been secretly conveyed away, and she is said to have passed the rest of her days in England. When her son, William Outlawe, was cited to appear before the bishop in his court, in the church of St. Mary at Kilkenny, he went "armed to the teeth with all sorts of armour," and attended with a very formidable company, and demanded a copy of the charges laid against him, which extended through thirty-four chapters. For the present he was allowed to go at large, because nobody dared to arrest him, and when the officers of the crown arrived, they showed so openly their favour towards him, that they took up their lodgings at his house. At length, however, having been convicted in the bishop's court of harbouring those accused of sorcery, he consented to go into prison, trusting, no doubt, to the secret protection of the great barons of the land.

The only person mentioned by name as punished for the extreme crime of sorcery was Petronilla de Meath, who was perhaps less provided with worldly interests to protect her, and who appears to have been made an expiatory sacrifice for her superiors. By order of the bishop, she was six times

flogged, and then, probably to escape a further repetition of this cruel and degrading punishment, she made a public confession, accusing not only herself but all the others against whom the bishop had proceeded. She said that in all England, "perhaps in the whole world," there was not a person more deeply skilled in the practices of sorcery than the lady Alice Kyteler, who had been their mistress and teacher in the art. She confessed to most of the charges contained in the bishop's articles of accusation, and said that she had been present at the sacrifices to the demon, and had assisted in making the unguents of the intestines of the cocks offered on this occasion, mixed with spiders and certain black "worms" like scorpions, with a certain herb called milfoil, and other herbs and "worms;" and with the brains and clothes of a child that had died without baptism, in the manner before related; that with these unguents they had produced various effects upon different persons, such as making the faces of certain ladies appear horned like goats; that she had been present at the nightly conventicles, and with the assistance of her mistress had frequently pronounced the sentence of excommunication against her own husband, with all the ceremonies required by their unholy rites; and that she had been present with the lady Alice when the demon named Robin Artisson appeared to her, and had witnessed acts pass between them which cannot here be described. This wretched woman, having made this public confession, was carried out into the city and burnt. This, says the relator, was the first witch who was ever burnt in Ireland.

The anger of the bishop of Ossory appears now to have been, to a certain degree, appeased. He was prevailed upon to remit the punishment of William Outlawe, enjoining him, as a reparation for his contempt of the church, that within the period of four years he should cover with lead the whole roof of his cathedral from the steeple eastward, as well as that of the chapel of the Holy Virgin. The rest of the lady Alice's "pestiferous society" were punished in different ways, with more or less severity; one or two of them, we are told, were subsequently burnt; others were flogged publicly

in the market-place and through the city; others were banished from the diocese; and a few, like their mistress, fled to a distance, or concealed themselves so effectually as to escape the hands of justice.*

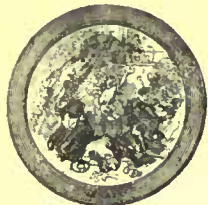
There was one person concerned in the foregoing events whom the bishop had not forgotten or forgiven. That was Arnald le Poer, the seneschal of Kilkenny, who had so strenuously advocated the cause of William Outlawe and his mother, and who had treated the bishop himself with so little respect. We learn that this proud prelate now accused him of heresy, excommunicated him, and obtained a writ by which he was committed prisoner to the castle of Dublin. Here he still remained in 1328, when Roger Outlawe was made lord justice of Ireland, who attempted to mitigate his sufferings. The bishop of Ossory, enraged at the humanity of the justice, accused him also of heresy and of abetting heretics, upon which a parliament was called, and the different accusations having been duly examined, Arnald le Poer himself would probably have been declared innocent and liberated from confinement, but before the end of the investigation he died in prison, and his body, lying under sentence of excommunication, remained long unburied.

To wind up fittingly this strange drama, the bishop who had been so great a persecutor of heresy in others was at last accused of the same crime himself, and the cause being brought before the archbishop of Dublin, he escaped from the toils of his enemies at home by appealing to the apostolic see, and, flying the country privately, repaired to Italy. Subsequent to this, he appears to have experienced a variety of troubles, in the course of which he suffered banishment during nine years. He died at a very great age in 1360.

* The foregoing narrative of these singular transactions is abridged from a Latin contemporary relation, evidently drawn up by one of the bishop's party, and therefore by no means impartial; it has been edited for the Camden Society by the author of the present work, under the title, "A Contemporary Narrative of the Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler, prosecuted for Sorcery in 1324; edited by Thomas Wright," &c. London, 1843. It ends with this paragraph, the account of the fate of Arnald le Poer being taken from other sources.

CHAPTER VIII.

IRISH GRIEVANCES; DISSENSIONS AMONG THE ENGLISH SETTLERS; NEW INSURRECTIONS AMONG THE NATIVES; THE "DEGENERATE" ENGLISH.



ON the first intelligence of the general insurrection which followed the arrival of Edward Bruce in Ireland, the English government,

alarmed at the warmth with which the native clergy espoused the cause of the invaders, found it expedient to have recourse to the court of Rome, which had hitherto been the invariable advocate of the English supremacy in that country. The pope replied to this appeal by a strong letter addressed to the chief of the Irish prelates, ordering them to strike with the censures of the church all who took part against the English, both laity and clergy. This order provoked and embarrassed the native chiefs of the north, at whose call the Scots had been induced to land on their shores, and now, headed by O'Neill of Tyrone, who was the head of the league against the English, they drew up a long remonstrance, which was sent to the sovereign pontiff in the name of that chieftain. This document, which was apparently drawn up by some of the native clergy, contains a general statement of the grievances under which the natives suffered, and of the disorders which had so long prevailed among them, and these are all laid to the charge of English misrule. To judge from this memorial, we might suppose that Ireland had never known oppression and injustice, or domestic feuds, or treason, murder, or rapine, before the English established themselves in the island. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the complaints thus addressed to the head of the Romish church, had but too much foundation in truth; and, while the remonstrants give no credit to the English kings for their efforts to repress the power of the unruly Anglo-Irish barons, and to ameliorate the condition of the country, they fully express the conviction that the power exercised by these barons was, at that time, the great curse of Ireland, as far as English misrule was concerned. Unfortunately, the multiplicity of independent native chiefs throughout Ireland had been as fatal to its peace as the feuds of English barons,

and both required equally the presence of a supreme power sufficiently strong to keep them in permanent subjection.

The Irish remonstrants commenced by recounting through how many ages they had been ruled happily by their own princes, and declared that they had never been subjected to foreign rule, until an Englishman became pope in the person of Adrian IV., who had not hesitated to make a grant of their island to his own countrymen, thus delivering them up, without their fault or any reasonable cause, "to be torn by fangs more cruel than those of any wild beasts." Since that period, they said, the English had never ceased to employ the most odious intrigues and violence to extirpate the Irish, and deprive them of the dominion of their own land, until they had so far succeeded, that the natives were now driven from all the fairest and most fertile districts of the island, and, compelled to seek refuge in the bogs and mountains, had even there to fight perpetually for a barren spot on which to live. Hence had arisen, between the English and the natives, those implacable enmities and perpetual wars which had engendered such a fearful list of mutual feuds, constant depredations, and detestable rapine, fraud, and perfidy without end; so that, according to their rough computation, not less than fifty thousand men had fallen by the sword on each side since the English first invaded the island, independent of those who had perished by famine or died in prison, and all this because they had no head to enlighten and direct them.

The remonstrants then proceeded to allege that, instead of acting to the spirit of pope Adrian's bull, their English rulers had broken through all the provisions it had made for the benefit of their Irish subjects. The Irish church, instead of being reformed and enriched, had been plundered and oppressed, and the prelacy had so frequently been made to feel the arm of the secular power, that it had no longer the spirit to lift up its voice against secular injustice, or to speak a word in defence of Irish independence. Instead of improving the manners of the people, and

restraining the progress of vice, as had been promised in the pope's bull, the character of the Irish is said to have been so much degraded, that the "holy and dove-like simplicity" which formerly characterized it, had been changed, by intercourse with the English, and their bad example, into "the craft of the serpent."*

The Irish chiefs complain, with more reason, of the injustice of depriving the natives of the benefit of equal laws, for their own laws were despised and rejected by the English, while they refused to allow them to participate in the advantages of the superior code by which they were, or at least professed to be, governed themselves. Every attempt to procure a redress of this grievance had hitherto failed. The remonstrance states four cases in which the civil disabilities to which the Irish were thus condemned were especially oppressive. First, any person, not an Irishman, might bring an action against an Irishman in the king's court; and not only did the mere fact of the defendant being an Irishman imply the necessary inability of defending himself, but an Irishman could bring no action in the king's court, and have no redress there against anybody whatever. If an Irishman, of whatever rank, whether layman or ecclesiastic, or even if a bishop, were murdered by an Englishman, the king's court of justice took no cognizance of the crime. The same was the case with rape, and other enormous crimes. Instances are found in the records of the courts, in which Englishmen, accused of outrages on female chastity, accompanied with brutal violence, merely pleaded that their victim was an Irishwoman. The third grievance stated in the remonstrance was, that no Irishwoman, married to an Englishman, could be admitted to a claim of dower on his death. The fourth was, that an English lord might set aside the wills of the natives subjected to him, and dispose of their property at his pleasure. It is added, that these various grievances were increased rather than alleviated by the conduct and example of the English clergy, many of whom expressed publicly their contempt for the native Irish; and it is stated that a certain Franciscan friar, named brother Simon, brother to an Irish bishop, had openly stated in the court and presence of Edward Bruce, the year before, that he considered it was not a sin

to kill an Irishman, and that, if he himself had committed the act, he should not hesitate in celebrating mass immediately after.

It must be owned that the tyrannies and oppressions here complained of were characteristic of the age, and were found in other countries besides Ireland, although the particular circumstances under which Ireland had been partially subdued, had given them there a more grievous character. If, even in England, the power of the crown was not sufficient to restrain the violence and tyranny of the great feudal lords, what must necessarily have been the case in Ireland, under the mere delegated power of a deputy who was obliged to seek his most efficient support in the very men whom it was his duty to punish? The latter chose to treat the whole body of the Irish in the same manner as their brethren in England ruled the serfs on their estates, but the Irish were but very partially conquered, and they resisted injustice with arms in their hands. If, even by the laws of their rulers, the only justice left for them was the revenge they could obtain by their own arms against those who injured them, it is not surprising that the island should remain in perpetual disorder. Still there were among the English settlers men who sought for an amelioration of both races; and two successive bishops of Dublin under Edward II., were actively employed in laying the foundations of an university in that city for the propagation of learning throughout Ireland.

The Irish chiefs concluded their remonstrance by declaring what was perhaps their primary feeling, that the two races, separated by blood, by manners, and by language, could never live in unity together; they said that they had repeatedly petitioned the kings of England for redress, but in vain, and that they had ceased petitioning in despair; that they had at length resolved on a last struggle to drive the English from the island as the only means of relieving themselves from the miseries they had so long suffered; and that, for this purpose, they had chosen the Scot, Edward Bruce, a lord descended from the same ancestors as themselves, to be king of Ireland.

The experiment thus made—the fearful sufferings they had endured under the short rule of their Scottish deliverers—offered a prospect by no means encouraging; and the final defeat of the invaders, left the Irish exposed to the present vengeance of their English rulers, with less hopes than ever of

* *Quod sancta et columbina ejus simplicitas, ex eorum cohabitatione et exemplo reprobo, in serpentinam calliditatem mirabiliter est mutata.*

any immediate redress of the grievances under which they had previously suffered. The hatred between the two races thus became more sanguinary as it was more desperate, and at the end of the reign of the second Edward, it had degenerated into the same spectacle of partizan warfare throughout the island which we have already seen during the greater part of the previous century. The closing scene of this reign in England resembled so much the practice of ages among the great Irish chieftains, that the native annalists record, with something like self-complacency, how "a great war" arose between the king of England and his queen, and how she dethroned the king, and how her son assumed the sovereignty against his father.* The vigorous rule of Edward III. was felt much less in Ireland than might have been expected, and at least the earlier period of it was distinguished by a larger amount than usual of Irish turbulence and disorder.

This arose, in a great measure, from the renewal of the feuds among the Anglo-Irish barons, which soon followed the defeat of the Scots. We have seen, in the last chapter, with what persevering ingenuity the Anglo-Irish were in the habit of circumventing each other in their legal procedures; and, in such a state of things, it is no wonder that those who felt themselves possessed of the power, sought to settle their quarrels by the more direct and expeditious method of an appeal to arms. A trifling cause revived the feud between the De Burghs and the Geraldines. The lord John le Poer had, for some reason or other, expressed his contempt for Maurice fitz Thomas (fitz Gerald), by calling him a rhymer, an offence which, as it appears, was not to be easily appeased. The Botilers, and the Berminghams, took part with Fitz Thomas, and the De Burghs, the old rivals of the Geraldines, sided with John le Poer; and each brought their forces into the field to decide their differences with the sword. The lands of both parties were ravaged and ruined, and many members of the different families engaged in this domestic warfare were slain, until at length, in a great battle between the hostile factions, Le Poer and the De Burghs were entirely defeated, and the lord John, the original aggressor, obliged to fly into England. The feud had now taken so serious a character, that the lord justice, who was at this time

Thomas fitz John earl of Kildare, found it necessary to interfere, but all his attempts to reconcile the enraged barons were unsuccessful; and finding his authority set at defiance, he strengthened the garrisons of the cities and towns, and made preparations for appealing to force in the support of the supreme government, and then sent his messengers to the king of England with complaints against the insolence of his great barons. The king, when he heard of their rebellious spirit, immediately issued mandates to them all, enjoining in strong terms their unconditional submission to his deputy. These, however, were now unnecessary, for the contending parties, weary of the work of destruction, and terrified at the havoc they had made, and at the probable consequences of their rebellious outbreak, made their submission to the lord justice, said that they had been provoked by personal injuries, disavowed all intention of injuring the king or his cities, and offered to make their appearance before him in a parliament to be held at Kilkenny, to answer all charges that might be brought against them. They came there accordingly, and made an humble suit for a charter of pardon for their offence; but the latter had assumed so serious a character that the petition was put off for further consideration by the council. These occurrences took place in the year 1328, before the end of which year the earl of Kildare died at Maynooth, and was succeeded in the office of lord justice by Roger Outlawe, prior of Kilmainham, the Irish chancellor mentioned in our preceding chapter. This man, who appears to have been popular and influential, succeeded, in the spring of 1329, in effecting a general reconciliation between the rival families who had given so much trouble to his predecessor; and two of the leaders, William de Burgh and the lord John le Poer, having returned from England, the young earl of Ulster gave a grand feast in the castle of Dublin, in commemoration of the happy conclusion of this great feud; and next day, notwithstanding it was the season of Lent, the lord Maurice fitz Thomas, on the part of the Geraldines, gave a similar feast in the church of St. Patrick.

While these lords were quarrelling in the south, a similar feud in the north proved fatal to one of the most distinguished of the house of Bermingham. The English families of the district now included in the county of Louth, in consequence of a quarrel, the grounds of which are not stated, met in hos-

* Annals of the Four Masters, under the year 1327.

tile array at a place named Balebraggan, now Bragganstown, and among a great number of Englishmen of distinction who fell in this disastrous encounter was John de Bermingham earl of Louth, the same who had defeated Edward Bruce, with his brother Piers de Bermingham, and several other members of his family. The Irish annalists, in recording this event, describe the lord of Louth as "the most valiant, powerful, and hospitable baron of the English of Ireland;" and they enumerate with regret, among the Irish slain on the side of the De Berminghams, "the blind O'Carroll," who was "the chief minstrel of Ireland and Scotland in his time," and the equal of whom, they believed, "never was and never will be."

It was time that there should be peace among the English of Ireland, for their dissensions had already encouraged the Irish to rise in different parts of the island. In the first year of king Edward's reign, the De Burghs, in spite of the feud mentioned above, were at open war with the Irish of Munster and of Connaught. The young earl of Ulster, William de Burgh, known as the brown earl, joining with the king of Connaught, Turlough O'Connor, and one of the O'Brians of Thomond, who had been deposed from the chieftainship, invaded that district, but met with a severe defeat. Another English force under his kinsman, Walter de Burgh, and Gilbert mac Costello, was defeated by the Mac Dermotts in Roscommon. The deposed chieftain of Thomond, Murtough O'Brien, was again defeated soon after in a second attempt to regain his power. And to crown the disasters of this year, 1328, a large English force, commanded by lord Thomas le Botiler, having proceeded against the Irish clans who had risen in Westmeath, was defeated near Mullingar, with terrible slaughter, by William mac Geoghan, and their leader, with a great number of English knights, fell in the battle.

The Irish of Leinster also took advantage of the dissensions among their rulers, and, rising in arms, marched in great force under a descendant of the ancient princes of that province, Donald mac Morrough, whom they had chosen for their king, against Dublin, but they were attacked near that city by sir Henry Traherne, and entirely defeated, their chief, Mac Morrough, being taken prisoner. His life was spared in consideration of a sum of two hundred pounds paid by his clan, but he was closely confined in the castle of Dublin, whence, however, he escaped by means

of a rope conveyed to him by an Englishman of the garrison, who was convicted and hanged for the offence.

The years which followed were marked by a continuation of the same disorders. The Irish septs of Leinster were not dismayed by their defeat, but the insurrection became if anything more serious, and soon extended to the neighbouring provinces. The English experienced serious defeats in other combats. Sir Simon de Geneville was thus defeated at Carbery in Kildare; and Brian O'Brien of Thomond, who placed himself at the head of the insurgents, overran the country almost without resistance, and burnt the towns of Tipperary and Athassel. In one of these ravaging excursions of the Irish of Leinster, they came suddenly to the church of Freinston, in which about eighty English, of all ages and sexes, were assembled at their devotions. These unfortunate people, well acquainted with the barbarity of their assailants, quietly resigned themselves to their fate, but they conducted their priest to the church door, and begged that he might be allowed to depart unhurt. Instead of listening to their prayer, the insurgents dashed to the ground, and trod under foot, the consecrated host which he held in his hands, and plunging their weapons into the body of the priest, they burnt the church, with all who were in it. The courage of the citizens of Wexford was roused to fury by this act of atrocity, and when the Irish approached their town, they issued out and drove them back with great slaughter.

In face of all these disorders, the government was obliged again to depend on the turbulent barons who had themselves given it so much trouble. James le Botiler and Maurice fitz Thomas had been propitiated by the new titles of earls of Ormond and Desmond, and two new palatinates were thus added to those which had already, by the power they placed in the hands of individuals, done so much towards perpetuating the misery of the Irish population of both races. The new earl of Desmond, at the head of nearly ten thousand men, attended at the summons of the lord justice, and with the promise of pay from the government, and marching against the clans of the O'Nolans, O'Morroughs, and O'Dempseys, soon reduced them to submission, and compelled them to give hostages. But he gave offence by being obliged to have recourse, for the support of his troops, to the old and odious

exaction of coyne and livery. The next year (1330) the Mac Geoghegans were again in arms in Meath, and were only suppressed, after an obstinate combat with the English forces under the earls of Ulster and Ormond, in which, among many other Irish of distinction, the sons of three Irish kings were slain. This insurrection had scarcely been overcome, when the attention of the Anglo-Irish government was called to a still more formidable enemy in the person of O'Brien of Thomond, who had raised a considerable army and taken possession of a very formidable position in the neighbourhood of Cashel. A parliament was called at Kilkenny, at which were present the archbishop of Dublin, the earls of Ulster and Ormond, the lord William de Bermingham, and the lord Walter de Burgh of Connaught, each having with him a considerable force, and it was resolved to march at once against O'Brien, for the purpose of driving him from his stronghold.

It appears that the rivalry between the De Burghs and the Geraldines had again begun to show itself, and the former, on their way to Limerick against O'Brien, although engaged in the service of the government, could not resist the temptation of plundering and laying waste the lands of the earl of Desmond, who had not attended the parliament at Kilkenny, and they carried away with them a very large booty. This outrage roused the animosity of the Geraldines, and the feud between the two families broke out with so much fury, that the lord justice was obliged to act with more than usual vigour, and he seized the heads of the two factions, the earls of Ulster and Desmond, and committed them both to the custody of the marshal of Limerick.

In 1331, a new lord justice was appointed in the person of sir Anthony Lucy, who seems to have been chosen for his severe and unbending character, and who showed from the first an equal resolution to put a stop to the inroads of the native Irish, and to resist the insolence of the English settlers. He brought over with him the lord Hugh de Lacy, who had been pardoned and restored to some degree of favour. Little more than a week after the arrival of the new lord justice, the Irish were defeated in a great battle at Fiornagh in Meath. Other disorders, however, in which the English were not equally successful, seemed not only to call for vigorous measures, but they gave rise to strong suspicions in the mind of sir Anthony

Lucy that there was a traitorous connivance among some of the Anglo-Irish lords, and the proud and powerful earl of Desmond became more especially an object of distrust. The lord justice thereupon summoned a parliament to meet him at Dublin, not only to deliberate on the measures necessary for the defence of the English settlements, but to prove the fidelity of the suspected barons. The latter paid no attention to the writs commanding their attendance, and the meeting was so inconsiderable that sir Anthony thought proper to adjourn it to the 7th of July, on which day the barons were summoned again to meet at Kilkenny. The energetic character of the lord justice appears to have had its effect in some cases, and the earl of Kildare and others who had absented themselves on the former occasion, now presented themselves, were sworn on the holy evangelists and on the relics to be faithful and obedient in future, and received a formal pardon for their previous contempt. But Maurice of Desmond and others still held aloof; and at the same moment intelligence arrived of an insurrection of the Irish of Leinster, who had taken and burnt the castle of Ferns, under circumstances which seemed to leave no room for doubt that they were acting in concert with the lords who refused obedience to the summons of the lord justice. The latter immediately issued writs against some of the principal offenders; the lord Henry Mandeville was arrested in the month of September; the earl of Desmond was seized at Limerick about the same time; the lord Walter de Burgh and his brother were soon afterwards taken into custody by the same authority; and the lord William de Bermingham and his son Walter were surprised at Clonmell in the February following; and they were all committed to safe custody in Dublin castle. The evidence against the Berminghams appears to have been of a more conclusive kind than that which affected the other prisoners, or it was thought sufficient to proceed to extremities against them as a warning to the rest. The lord William, in spite of his great military services, was publicly hanged at Dublin, and his son was only saved from a similar fate by the circumstance of his being in holy orders. The earl of Desmond, after a long and rigorous confinement, was discharged on giving sufficient sureties, and was sent into England.

It appears that now, at length, the supreme

government in England had determined upon a substantial reform in the condition of Ireland, and that sir Anthony Lucy was not merely acting on his own views and responsibility. It was not long after his arrival as chief governor that certain articles were sent over by the English monarch for this purpose, the most important of which was that which ordered that one and the same law be observed to the Irish and the English, excepting only the serfs or villans, or, as they were termed in Ireland, betages, which were of course, according to the social system of that age, the property of their lords.* Another of these ordinances was directed against the evil of absenteeism. They were soon followed by a resumption of all Irish grants made during the power of Mortimer and by the queen-mother; and by the still more important announcement of the intention of the king to pass over into Ireland in person, and apply himself to the task of carrying out his intentions of reform, and by a mandate to the earls of Ulster and Ormond, and to sir William and sir Walter de Burgh, to repair immediately to his court in England to concert measures necessary for his voyage. A summons was also addressed to all lords possessing lands in Ireland, who were absent in England, requiring them to accompany him and recover their possessions out of the hands of the Irish insurgents. This latter summons is dated on the 28th of January, 1332; and, although the term fixed for the king's voyage was prolonged, yet an order for arresting all ships in the ports of Ireland and sending them over to Holyhead for the king's convenience, and another for raising a body of Welsh infantry to attend him, seemed to announce a fixed intention of putting this design into effect, when he at length suddenly threw off the mask, and the amelioration of Ireland was lost sight of in the greater and more brilliant prospect of the invasion of Scotland. The only result of all the preparations for the Irish expedition, was a temporary activity in the government of that country, which brought to light some of its grievances and did little to remove them, and a few orders which might have done good, but which appear to have been thrown aside and never acted upon.

The strong measures of sir Anthony Lucy

* *Quod una et eadem lex fiat tam Hibernicis quam Anglicis, excepta servitute betagiorum penes dominos suos eodem modo quo usitatum est in Anglia de villanis.*

were followed, under sir John Darcy, who was appointed, for the third time, to the government of Ireland in 1332, by an act of weakness which encouraged the turbulence of the Irish. After he had relinquished Ireland for a more promising field of glory in Scotland, the king issued writs to the lord justice and other authorities, giving them authority to admit to the king's peace all disaffected persons, as well English as Irish, upon such terms as might appear honourable and expedient to the lord justice and his council. It was no doubt intended as an easy mode of appeasing the excitement occasioned by the expectation of the king's visit; but it was to a certain degree a grant of impunity for past offences, and it was taken by all parties to whom it applied as an acknowledgment of their own power, and the various disorders which had undergone a temporary check soon broke out with increased violence.

Among the English themselves, the scenes of turbulence which followed were most disastrous. One of the first, and that which caused a greater sensation than any single event since the slaughter of the earl of Pembroke on the Curragh of Kildare, was the murder of the young earl of Ulster. This nobleman, who was only in his twentieth year, fell a sacrifice, as it appears, to a feud among his own kinsmen. For some reason or other, he is said to have imprisoned Walter de Burgh and others, an indignity which was so deeply resented by Walter's sister, Gyle de Burgh, the wife of sir Richard Mandeville, that she never rested till she had prevailed upon her son, sir Robert Mandeville, to take sanguinary vengeance for the offence. Raising a large body of people who were ready to participate in any crime at his orders, sir Robert Mandeville laid wait for the earl as he was proceeding with a small retinue to Carrickfergus, on Sunday the sixth of July, 1333, and suddenly attacked and slew him at a place called the Fords, not far from that town. It is said that sir Robert Mandeville himself struck the first blow at the unfortunate earl. The English of Carrickfergus and the surrounding country, among whom the young earl of Ulster appears to have been popular, were so enraged at this outrage, that they hunted out every one concerned in it, and punished them in the most summary manner; according to the Irish annalists, who seem to commiserate the fate of the "brown earl" as much as his own countrymen, "some of them were

hanged, others were slain, and some were torn asunder to avenge his death." So extensive was this vengeance, that when the lord justice arrived at Carrickfergus to inquire into the crime, and provide for the due punishment of the assassins, he learnt that the country people, who had thus anticipated him, had put to death no less than three hundred of them in one day.

The countess of Ulster was so terrified when she received intelligence of the death of her husband, that she fled directly to England, leaving his extensive territories without any adequate defence. O'Neill of Tyrone invaded his lands in the north, slaughtered and expelled a great number of the English tenants, and distributed them among the people of his own clan. In Connaught, two younger branches of the De Burgh family, sir William (the progenitor of the earls of Clanriekarde) and sir Edmund (ancestor of the earls of Mayo), both long known from their feuds with the native Irish, confederated together to seize upon the great possessions of the earl of Ulster in that part of the island, and in the division, sir William obtained the town of Galway, and all the territory on that side of the Shannon. They then proclaimed themselves independent, renouncing the English dress, language, and laws, which they exchanged for those of the native Irish, and adopting the names respectively of Mac William Oughtier and Mae William Eighth, or the further and nether Mac William. They were both sons of William de Burgh.

Events like these naturally raised the spirits and hopes of the Irish, who had never been reduced to a state approaching to tranquillity; and they must necessarily have discouraged the English government, which lost at once the command of two very important frontiers. They thus added to the regret occasioned by the murder which had given rise to them, which was long remembered with so much dismay, that it was customary, in all charters of pardon granted in Ireland, to except especially "all concerned in the death of the late earl of Ulster, or in giving assistance to the enemies of Scotland."* When the lord justice, who had led with him into Ulster a formidable army, found that such wholesale justice had already been done on the murderers of the earl of Ulster, he proceeded no further in the object

for which he came, but passed over to the opposite coast to join king Edward in his Scottish war, leaving the lord Thomas de Burgh as his deputy during his absence.

During the few years of which we have been speaking, the various independent states of the Irish remained in the same unsettled state as before the Scottish invasion. The family of the O'Connors in Connaught had lost much of its former influence, a portion of which had passed to the Mac Dermotts, who had become formidable by their warlike spirit. In 1329, Cathal O'Connor, one of the family nearest in blood to the O'Connor who held the chieftainship, was expelled from his possessions in Roscommon and Galway by the O'Kellys, who acted in concert with the De Burghs. The latter were now daily trespassing more and more on the ancient kingdom of the O'Connors. In the course of these encroachments, while Walter de Burgh was encamped at Leagmoigh in Moylurg, in Roscommon, in 1330, he was attacked by the ruling chieftain of Connaught, Turlough O'Connor, and compelled to relinquish his position and retire upon the county of Mayo. There he was joined by the English Mac Costellos and the Irish Mac Dermotts, and was thus enabled to resume the offensive. They defeated O'Connor in a great battle, and drove him before them, although, according to the Irish annals, the king of Connaught "fled with great bravery." The same authorities inform us that Walter de Burgh, intoxicated with his successes, now openly avowed his intention of deposing O'Connor and making himself king of Connaught, and that, having increased his forces with new levies of English and Irish, he was on the point of fighting another and a still more decisive battle, when the Mac Dermotts, who refused to assist in placing an Englishman on the throne, turned suddenly round, and, joining the standard of Turlough O'Connor, became instrumental in effecting a reconciliation, hollow as it was hasty, for the same year we find Turlough compelled to seek the protection of the young earl of Ulster against the violence of his kinsmen. The Mac Dermotts seem, however, by their conduct on this occasion, to have provoked the resentment of Walter de Burgh, who early next year marched into the country of Moylurg, and committed great havoc. The Irish were severely defeated in an attempt to resist this invasion, but, after extensive spoliation, a

* *Morte nuper comitis Ultoniæ et adherentia Scotis inimicis exceptis.*

peace was at length effected, and the De Burghs retired. The earl of Ulster seems to have interfered to put an end to these troubles, for in 1332 we find his forces engaged against the united strength of Mac Dermott and Walter de Burgh, whom they defeated in battle.

Such, with the addition of a few private contests in which several of the O'Connors fell, was the condition of Connaught, during the brief period which preceded the murder of the earl of Ulster, when the branch of the family of the De Burghs, notorious for its designs against the O'Connors, became still more powerful by usurping the earl's estates, and when they appear to have aimed at forwarding their ambitious views on the crown of Connaught by assuming the Irish law and language, as a measure likely to conciliate the favour of the natives.

This practice now became rather common, and added a new element of disorder to those already existing; for subsequent to this period the Irish legal records speak of "English rebels," as well as of "Irish enemies." The people who thus relinquished their nationality to serve their ambition or other passions, began to be known by the title of "degenerate" English. Many of them took Irish names, and they were often found in arms, joined with the native septs, in rebellion against the English government, under which circumstances the latter found it necessary to treat them with more than usual severity. Two of the Le Poers were seized and thrown into prison, on suspicion of a design to join in rebellion with the natives; and Maurice fitz Nicholas lord of Kerry, who was taken prisoner in a battle in Munster, in which the Irish were defeated by the earl of Desmond with a loss of twelve hundred men, was condemned to confinement so rigorous, that it soon ended with his life, he having been, according to the popular report, actually starved to death. Property thus became so insecure, that the young countess of Ulster, who remained in England, was induced to relinquish all claim on her Irish estates, which she surrendered to the English government in exchange for estates of equal value in England.

The ten years which followed the tragedy that drove this lady from Ireland, though not distinguished by any great events within the English pale, were marked by their full share of the disorders which had so long prevailed among the Irish in other parts. A few of the more prominent of these events

may be related in the order in which they occur in the ancient annals. The death of Hugh O'Donnell, king or lord (as it was now more usual to call him) of Tirconnell, in 1333, gave rise to a domestic war between his two sons, Connor O'Donnell, who succeeded him, and Art O'Donnell, which ended in the slaughter of the latter. Early in the year following, a large force of the English and Irish of Connaught marched into Clare, and reduced to subjection the clan of Mac Namara. In the course of their depredations they set fire to a church, in which were a hundred and eighty persons and two priests, not one of whom was allowed to escape. In 1335, besides several sanguinary feuds in the northern parts of that province, we are informed that all the west of Connaught was laid waste in a great contention between the different families of the De Burghs. The death of the chief of the Mac Dermotts in 1336, and the accession of his son Connor mac Dermott to the chieftainship, a man inferior in abilities to his father, was the signal for another of those great plundering expeditions, which appear to have been considered among the native Irish as an almost necessary ceremony at the beginning of a new reign; on this occasion the Mac Dermotts, joined by some of the O'Connors, made the territory of Tireragh, in Sligo, the scene of their depredations. Other septs of the Irish of Connaught plundered the De Burghs in the south, and the Mac Costellos in the north. Subsequently, king Turlough O'Connor with a considerable army, assisted, it would appear, by the Mac Dermotts, invaded Mayo, and took and destroyed the castle known by the name of Castlemore-Costello, or the great castle of Costello. While the Irish annals dwell on these partial successes of their countrymen, the English chronicles relate that in this same year, on the day of St. Laurence, the Irish of Connaught were defeated by the English of that province with such terrible loss, that no less than ten thousand of them were slain in the field, while the English only lost one man. The accuracy of this statement, at least as far as regards the enormous disparity of the numbers killed, has been doubted.

During the year 1337, these disorders had subsided into a few smaller depredations. Edmund de Burgh was still at war with the king of Connaught; but the two great branches of the De Burghs of Connaught, the brothers or uncles of the murdered earl, and the sons of William de Burgh of Clan-

rickarde, appear to have been reconciled. They broke out again in 1338, in another tragedy; for Edmund de Burgh "Mac William," as he is distinguished by the Irish annalists, having seized upon the person of Edmund de Burgh "the son of the earl," he carried him away to Lough Mask in Mayo, and there tied a stone round the neck of the captive and threw him into the lake. The "sons of the earl" appear, in these later troubles in Connaught, to have been the constant allies of king O'Connor, who was provoked beyond measure by this deed of atrocity, and immediately raised an army, with which he marched against Edmund "mac William." After a renewal of the same scenes of destruction which had so often devastated this province, Edmund de Burgh was at length defeated and driven from all his possessions, and compelled to betake himself to the sea, where he collected a numerous fleet of small vessels, with which he carried on a piratical warfare among the islands on the coast. Here also he was at length defeated by king Turlough, and, in 1339, he took refuge in Ulster, where serious disorders were created by the O'Neills and the O'Donnells. During this year the spirit of insurrection had spread widely through

the English settlements; and while the earl of Desmond, as has been already stated, was engaged in reducing the Irish of Munster, who had been supported in their revolt by Maurice fitz Nicholas lord of Kerry, the earl of Kildare was obliged to march against a formidable revolt of the Irish of Leinster; and having defeated them, he pursued the O'Dempsys so closely, that many of them were drowned in the river Barrow. At the same time the lord justice, who was at this time Thomas de Charleton bishop of Hereford, was called into the field by a similar insurrection at Idrone, in the county of Carlow, and returned with a richer booty than had ever been carried away from that country. In the course of this scene of universal discord, it is recorded that "all the corn in Ireland was destroyed," and that the country was consequently visited with the evils of famine.

The year 1340 saw a series of equally sanguinary feuds between the O'Kellys in Hy-Maine, between the O'Rourkes and the O'Connors, and subsequently between the latter and the Mac Dermotts, and the annalists give a long list of chieftains who fell in combats or by treachery in different parts of the island.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW AND SEVERE POLICY OF KING EDWARD TOWARDS THE ANGLO-IRISH BARONS; SIR RALPH UFFORD, AND THE EARLS OF DESMOND AND KILDARE.



HE pride of the few English oligarchs who were the real masters in Ireland had long given umbrage to the English monarchs, who had often expressed their dissatisfaction, though the weakness of

some had encouraged the growth of the evil, while pressing occupations in other parts had called off the attention of those who were more willing and able to remedy it, until it had gained so much head that it seemed past recovery. The king's deputies had been powerless against it, except when for a moment some fortuitous circumstances had come to their relief; and recent events

had shown that even the native Irish were encouraged in their turbulence in order that if any formidable attempt should be made by the government at Dublin against the English barons (an event which seems now to have been anticipated), the Irish might be let loose to embarrass it with an attack which those barons believed could only be overcome by calling in their assistance in its support. The Irish themselves had gained strength in consequence of these intrigues, and in several instances they had thus regained possession of their ancient territories by their alliance with the English lords. Thus, about the beginning of the reign of Edward II., the English lord who held the territory of Leix, in Leinster, having appointed one of the O'Moores to be his

captain of war in that territory, this chief took advantage of the power thus delegated to him to seize upon the country for himself, and a similar appointment about the same time enabled Mac Murrough, the chief of the Cavenaghs, to possess himself of the county of Carlow and of the greater part of that of Wexford. By these means, at the time of which we are now speaking, the greater part of the lands of Leinster, the district in which the English first established themselves, had fallen into the possession of the descendants of the original princes of that province, and we shall a little later find these chiefs giving no little trouble to their English rulers.

It had become of late more and more the policy of the English kings to conciliate the native Irish, and to repress the insolence of the English barons. This policy, from the circumstance of its having been exerted fitfully and partially, had sometimes produced a favourable effect upon the Irish, while more frequently it had been received only as a proof of weakness in their enemies. Most of the lord justices appointed by Edward III. had been sent over from England, and were evidently selected as persons not likely to be influenced by the prejudices which actuated most of those whose interests lay in Ireland, and the hostile feelings of the king against the Irish barons, whom he believed to have been the cause of all the disorders and embarrassments of his government in that country, is said to have been increased by the backwardness they showed in contributing to his aid in his wars against Scotland and France. This backwardness was indeed the result of their dissatisfaction at the intention openly shown to govern the island with a stronger hand than had ever been exerted over them before; for several years before, when the articles of reform already mentioned were dispatched to sir Anthony Lucy, the king threatened that, if the great landholders were not more attentive to their duty, he should be compelled to take their possessions into his own hands.

The difficulties which the king's deputies in Ireland encountered in carrying out the instructions of their sovereign, is proved by the rapid succession of appointments. In 1340, Thomas de Charleton bishop of Hereford had been succeeded in the office of lord justice by Roger Outlaw prior of Kilmainham. This governor, who now held the office for the fourth time, died soon after

his appointment, and was succeeded the same year by sir John Darcy, who was now constituted lord justice of Ireland for life. Darcy, who had held this distinguished office five times before, and who therefore was well acquainted with its duties and its difficulties, did not on this occasion repair to his post in person, but he sent over as deputy lord justice sir John Morris, whose appointment to govern them, he being but a simple knight, the barons of Ireland seem from the first to have regarded as an insult.

No sooner had the new lord justice entered upon his office, in 1341, than the king proceeded to the most rigorous measures against the "old English," as the great landed proprietors in Ireland were now called, to distinguish them from the new English, whose property and interests lay in England. The first measure, which was motived on the necessities in which the king was placed by his wars, was to revoke all suspensions or remissions by himself or his predecessors of debts due to the crown, which were now ordered to be strictly levied without delay. This was followed by a general resumption of all the lands, liberties, seignories, and jurisdictions granted in Ireland by the present king or by his father. Several persons who held places in the Irish government were at the same time dismissed from their offices, and some ordinances were put forward for important reforms in the official administration.

The astonishment of the old English at these sudden measures, was increased to an extraordinary degree, when, shortly afterwards (in 1342), a royal ordinance arrived, addressed to the justiciary, sir John Darcy, which, after stating that it had appeared to the king and his council that he would be better and more profitably served in Ireland by English officers having revenues and possessions in England, than by Irishmen or Englishmen married in Ireland and having estates there, ordered that immediate information should be obtained relating to all the officers, "greater or less," within the king's land of Ireland, and that all those who held benefices, or were married and possessed estates in that land, and had no possessions in England, should be immediately removed from their offices, and fit Englishmen, having lands, tenements, and benefices in England, substituted in their room.

This sweeping measure, which, at one blow, proscribed the whole race of those who had originally conquered the land, who had since defended it with their swords, and

who still held it in their power, provoked a general feeling of indignant opposition. It was, under all the circumstances, a dangerous experiment, which, if persevered in, could only have had the effect of increasing the rivalry among the English in Ireland, and adding to the disorders of that unhappy country. But the old barons, who knew well enough their own strength, and the advantage they derived by their distance from the seat of power, openly declared their intention of resisting, and began to confederate together in all parts of the land. The extensive and powerful family of the Geraldines, headed by its two chiefs, the earls of Desmond and Kildare, was especially distinguished in this general league against the government.

Alarmed at the threatening attitude of the great Anglo-Irish families, and anxious to devise some means of allaying the general excitement, the lord justice summoned a parliament to meet at Dublin in the October of the year just mentioned. But the great lords refused to pay any attention to the call, and the meeting was small and without result; while a much larger assembly—a sort of opposition parliament—although, none of the king's officers being present, it could lay no claim to that name, met at Kilkenny in the month of November, under the immediate presidency of the earl of Desmond. The old barons here assembled agreed upon a spirited remonstrance, which was addressed to the king, and professed to be the act of the prelates, earls, barons, and commons of Ireland. This important document, which is written in the Anglo-Norman (or, as it is more popularly termed, the Norman-French,) language, has been preserved from the circumstance of its having been entered on the English close roll of this year.*

As might be expected, the complaints of the Anglo-Irish lords, as expressed in this remonstrance, were especially directed against what they called the mal-administration of the king's officers, meaning, of course, those who were sent over from England. This,

they said, was the cause of the total neglect of fortifications and castles, particularly in the lands of the late earl of Ulster, in Ulster and Connaught, which were now in the king's custody and left in the charge of his officers, so that more than a third part of the lands conquered by his progenitors had of late years been regained by the Irish enemy. Among the castles which had in different parts been abandoned to the enemy, the remonstrance enumerates those of Roscommon, Rathdown, Athlone, and Bunratty. The Irish were thus encouraged to be insolent on one hand, while the king's servants are represented as equally distressing his faithful subjects by their excesses. Some of the castles, they state, had been lost by the conduct of the king's treasurers, who withheld their pay from the governors and warders, and either obliged them in their necessities to accept a small part of the arrears and give acquittance for the whole, or substituted in their places mean and insufficient persons, who would remain satisfied with any wages they might think proper to allow; they sometimes appointed governors to castles never erected, charging their full pay to the king, while they only gave them a small portion of it. The subject, the complainants say, was oppressed by the exaction of victuals which, though never paid for, were charged at their full value to the crown as if duly purchased; and, in the same spirit, military expeditions were announced by the chief governor without the consent of the nobles, in order that money might be exacted from those who were unwilling or unable to attend in person. Treaties, it is alleged, were often made with the Irish, by which they were left in possession of lands which they had unjustly seized from their English lords, and when the latter attempted to recover them, they were punished with fine and imprisonment. They complained further of partial truces made with their enemies, which, by securing one district alone, left them at liberty to infest another; of the losses to the public service by absentees; and of

* The old English annalists give a very brief and unsatisfactory account of this proceeding. The "Chronicles of Ireland" inserted in Hollinshed, say the nobles "in quietwise assembled themselves together at Kilkennie, when they with the commons agreed upon certaine questions to be demanded of the king by waie of supplication, signifieng in the same partlie their greefes, which questions were in effect as followeth:

"1. How a realme of warre might be governed by one both unskillfull and unable in all warlike service?

"2. How an officer under the king, that entered verie poore, might in one year grow to more excessive wealth, than men of great patrimonie and livelihood in manie yeares?

"3. How it chanced, that sith they were all called lords of their owne, that the sovereigne lord of them all was not a pennie the richer for them?"

This account shows the traditional belief that the anger of the Irish lords was especially directed against their ruler, the lord justice, or at least the deputy, sir John Morris.

illegal seizures of the persons and properties of English subjects. Various instances are given of corruption and oppression on the part of the king's officers, which show that the Irish government was not free from serious disorders which required reformation; but at the same time many of these complaints were more specious than real, and others involve the very questions at issue between Anglo-Irish insubordination and the supreme power which was now exerting itself to procure peace and tranquillity for the English settlements in Ireland.

Among other of the minor complaints brought against the government of Ireland in this remonstrance, were the greediness of the king's ministers in uniting, in one person, a number of offices, for the purpose of receiving a multiplicity of fees; the seizure of lands by the king's escheators, merely for the sake of the fee they received on restoring them; the hardship of persons indicted for felonies in Ireland being compelled to appear and answer for them before the king in England; and a number of others, into the truth of which the king was requested to institute a searching inquiry, and to apply a speedy remedy. But the grand object of complaint was, the recent order for the resumption of grants made by the king and his predecessors, and this therefore holds a prominent place in the remonstrance. The barons remind the king of their long and great services, both in Ireland and in foreign wars, and their loyalty and fidelity on so many trying occasions, which they contrast with the character of the new English officers now sent to rule them, and who had misrepresented and calumniated them before the throne, men who came into the kingdom without knowledge of its condition or interests, who, too poor to indulge their passions or support their estate, came there only to repair their shattered fortunes and fill their coffers by extortion, to the great detriment and affliction of the people. Through the representations of these new governors, they said that they had themselves been brought into disfavour with their sovereign; and, after reminding him how his progenitors and himself had, as a reward for their services, granted, by letters patent, to divers persons of that realm, lands, tenements, franchises, wards, marriages, and pardons of debts, which, by virtue of such letters patent, they had held in uninterrupted possession, they complained that of late his ministers, by orders received from England, "as they pre-

tended," had resumed and taken into the king's hands what had been granted for good and reasonable causes; and they intimated their belief that this had been done by the king's officers contrary to the tenor and intent of his orders, "to endamage others for their own private emolument," meaning, probably, that they suspected it was only a new method of extortion, by exacting heavy fines for renewing the grants, "which things," they proceeded to say, "seem to your liege subjects contrary to reason, as their ancestors and they have well deserved, and do deserve, by defending and maintaining, to the utmost of their power, the dominion of the land to your use. For which, sire, may it please you to ordain that they be not expelled from their freeholds without being called into judgment, according to the provision of Magna Charta."

It appears that this energetic remonstrance was received by the king with some degree of deference, and that he returned an answer calculated to allay the discontent; and, with regard to the resumptions, he is said to have promised that the grants of his predecessors should be restored without diminution, that those made in his own reign should be delivered up on sufficient surety that they should be again surrendered, if on a legal inquisition they were found resumable, as granted without just cause, and that the pardons of debts should be deemed valid until the reasons for such pardons should be duly examined. A writ, addressed to the remonstrants, is still preserved on the Close Rolls in the Tower, in which the king acquaints them that he has sent his answers to the several articles of their petition, under the great seal, to John March, the chancellor of Ireland, and Thomas de Wogan; and he takes the occasion to inform them of his intention to pass over into France with a large force, and asks for their assistance in the expedition. Thus the king's attention was carried off a second time, by the necessities of foreign war, from the internal reforms which he appears to have meditated in the government of Ireland.

Faction still continued to reign in that country, and to embarrass the government, and the king saw more and more the necessity of appointing to the office of lord justice a man of stern and unbending character, who would proceed with equal rigour against Irish enemies or English rebels. Such a man was sir Ralph Ufford, who had married the countess dowager of Ulster, and who

was appointed to the government of Ireland in 1344. The rigour of this man's government was such, that, if we believe the annalists, the superstition of the common people laid to his charge the unusually long course of tempestuous weather with which the island happened to be visited during his administration; and the popular odium fell if possible more heavily upon his wife than upon himself, for she is accused of having by her avaricious disposition urged him to enrich himself by the most unjustifiable extortions.

When sir Ralph Ufford arrived in Ireland, he found the English pale again thrown into disorder by the insurrection of the Irish septs of Leinster who had latterly gained so much power, while the English border was threatened on every side with predatory invasions. One of his first acts was to give immediate command to the lords marchers to repair to their respective stations and attend to the duties which they had of late been accustomed to neglect; and he proclaimed heavy penalties against all guilty of conveying provisions, horses, or arms to the enemy. It was still evidently the belief of the government that the Irish received encouragement in their restlessness from the English, who in some way or other contrived to benefit by their turbulence, or, at all events, to make it subservient to their own ambition or revenge. To provide against the old evil of partial warfare, it was now strictly ordered that there should be but one war and one peace for the king's lands, and that wherever an attack might be made it should be considered as directed against the whole body of the king's subjects, who were all to unite instantly in one common cause to repel one common danger.

But before such ordinances could be fully carried into effect, it was necessary to reduce to order the turbulent barons who had so long thwarted the intentions of the government, and the earls of Desmond and Kildare, with their numerous adherents, still held themselves proudly aloof. Sir Ralph Ufford showed himself equal to the emergency, and it was probably this circumstance which drew so much odium upon his memory. Provoked at the contumacy of these noblemen, the lord justice called a parliament to meet at Dublin on the seventh of June, 1345, and summoned them to attend there as a test of their allegiance. The barons not only set the summons of the lord justice at defiance, but they prepared to

repeat their former manœuvre, and the earl of Desmond called an opposition parliament or assembly of his own friends and confederates in the town of Callan. The inflexible lord justice, nowise daunted by this act of defiance, instantly issued a royal proclamation, prohibiting the meeting as an act of rebellion, and forbidding the lords to attend on their peril. The latter were alarmed at this bold measure, and this time the summons of their leader remained without effect. Sir Ralph Ufford at the same time raised the king's standard, and collected a formidable army, with which he marched at once into Munster, proceeded against the earl of Desmond as a rebel, and, seizing upon his estates, collected his rents into the king's exchequer. In the course of this hostile invasion of the territories of the refractory earl, Ufford obtained possession by stratagem of the castles of Iniskelly and Island; and he hanged the three knights who had the command of them, sir Eustace le Poer, sir William Grant, and sir John Cottrell, because they had practised the illegal exaction of coyne and livery.

The earl of Desmond was himself alarmed at the vigorous proceedings of the lord justice, and he now surrendered himself and was let to bail, on the recognizances of the earls of Ulster and Ormond, and upwards of twenty knights.* But when the time came according to the condition of his recognizance, the earl very unworthily failed to appear, and was not to be found, upon which eighteen of the knights who had been his bail were deprived of their estates and utterly ruined. The enemies of the lord justice represented this as a cruel act of vengeance against unoffending individuals; but the old English writer of the chronicles of Ireland defends him on the ready plea that he had only enforced the law which was necessary to make sureties of any effect. "The lord justice," says this author, "is charged with strict dealing by writers in this

* According to the English annals, the earl of Desmond's sureties were William de Burgh earl of Ulster, James le Botiler earl of Ormond, Richard Tuite, Nicholas de Verdon, Maurice de Rochford, Eustace le Poer, Gerald de Rochford, John fitz Robert le Poer, Robert de Barry, Maurice fitz Gerald, John de Wellesley, Walter le Fant, Richard Rokelley, Henry Traherne, Roger le Poer, John Lenfant, another Roger le Poer, Matthew fitz Henry, Richard le Wales, Edmund de Burgh (son of the earl of Ulster), David de Barry, William fitz Gerald, Fulk de Fraxino, Robert fitz Maurice, Henry fitz Berkeley, John fitz George de Roche, and Thomas de Lees de Burgh.

behalf, for that the same persons had assisted him in his wars against Desmond. But truly, if we shall consider the matter with indifference, he did no more than law and reason required. For if every surety, upon forfeiture of his bond, should be forborn, that otherwise doth his duty, what care would men have either to procure sureties or to become sureties themselves? But such is the affection of writers, specially when they have conceived any misliking towards those of whom they take occasion to speak, so as many a worthy man hath been defamed, and with slander greatly defaced, in things wherein he rather hath deserved singular commendation."

Having thus disposed of the earl of Desmond, the lord justice proceeded with equal rigour against the other great leader of the Anglo-Irish malcontents, Thomas earl of Kildare; but in this case he followed a course of deceit and treachery which can only be excused by the common occurrence of such acts in these times, and more especially in Ireland. One of the officers of his government, sir William Burton, was sent into Munster with a writ summoning the earl to join the king with his forces, but carrying with him another secret writ empowering him to seize on the earl's person and throw him into prison. When Kildare published the royal summons, and called his followers to his standard, they assembled so quickly, that sir William was not allowed the time to put his secret orders into execution, before it was too late to make the attempt with any chance of success. His only resource was a new act of treachery; he gave specious reasons for suspending the levy of troops, which destroyed the earl's suspicions, and persuaded him to accompany him to Dublin, for the purpose of consulting with the king's council. There, in the middle of the council-chamber in the exchequer, he was suddenly arrested and committed to close confinement.

Thus far success had crowned the policy of the lord justice Ufford, and the power of the rebellious lords seemed nearly broken; his administration was brought to a close by his death, which occurred in the April of 1346. So great was the hatred excited by his rigorous government, that this event, as we are assured by the old annalists, was welcomed throughout the country with bonfires and other signs of public rejoicing. His wife, the countess of Ulster, who is said to have been received like an empress, and to have lived like a queen, was fain to steal

away through a postern-gate of the castle of Dublin, to avoid the curses of her enemies and the clamour of her creditors. The fact of his having died in poverty and debt is certainly a testimony to the integrity of the man who is represented by his enemies as enriching himself by his oppressive extortion.

The council immediately elected in his place, as lord justice of Ireland, sir Roger Darcy, the second son of sir John Darcy; but the king appears to have superseded him by the appointment of sir John Morris to the office, who also was succeeded by sir Walter de Bermingham within three months after Ufford's death. The harsh policy which had proscribed the old Anglo-Irish lords, seems now to have been relinquished. Under sir John Morris the earl of Kildare was liberated from prison, on the recognizance of twenty-four lords and gentlemen, and next year he served the king with great bravery at the siege of Calais. Sir Walter de Bermingham obtained permission for the earl of Desmond to proceed to London to plead his cause before the king in person, and he was graciously received, taken into the king's pay, and, as well as the earl of Kildare, attended him in the war in France. Other acts of conciliation, joined with the favour shown to the two great earls, and the encouragements given to the Irish lords in general to hope for the restoration of the grants which had been resumed by the crown, produced an unusual degree of tranquillity in the English territory for several years.

During this period several lord justices followed each other in succession, few of whom contributed in any remarkable manner to the reformation of the grievances which had really been the causes of the disorders of Ireland. Sir Thomas Rokeby held the office three times, and died while holding it in 1356. In one of the intervals between his successive nominations to the office, in 1353, the earl of Desmond, who had recovered entirely the favour of his sovereign, was appointed to the office of lord justice for life, but he died a few months after, on the 25th of January, 1354. In 1359, the earl of Ormond was appointed lord justice; in 1360, he was succeeded for a short time by the earl of Kildare, but was restored to his office before the end of the year.

It was under the administration of sir Thomas Rokeby, as far as we can learn, that the crown at length restored the grants which had been resumed under the adminis-

tration of sir John Darcy. This lord justice, who held the office long, and apparently with advantage to his sovereign, for it is stated that he was allowed a larger retinue than any of his predecessors, is nevertheless represented as a man remarkable for his simplicity and homely integrity. It is recorded in the old chronicles, that when, on one occasion, he was blamed for allowing himself to be served with wooden cups, he replied, "Those homely cups and dishes pay truly for what they contain; I had rather drink out of wood, and pay in gold and silver, than drink out of gold, and make wooden payment."

The same chroniclers tell another story of this period, which may help to picture the temper of the age. There dwelt in Ulster a wealthy knight named sir Robert Savage, who, apprehensive of an attack from the Irish, began to fortify his estates against them "with castles and piles." His son watched the progress of these works with some interest, and, when exhorted by his father to continue them as the best defence against his enemies, he replied, "I remember well the proverb, Better a castle of bones than of stones. Where strength and courage of valiant men are ready to help us, never will I, with God's grace, cumber myself with dead walls. My fort shall be wheresoever young bloods are stirring, and where I find room to fight." The father, we are told, angry at the young man's waywardness, gave up his project, and built no other castles. And, saith the chronicler who records this anecdote, and who wrote under queen Elizabeth, "the want thereof and such like hath been the decay as well of the Savages as of all the English gentlemen in Ulster; as the lack also of walled towns is one of the principal occasions of the rude wildness in other parts of Ireland." Sir Robert Savage was himself not backward in the field, for another characteristic story is told of him by the same chronicler. Having brought together his men to attack the Irish, who had invaded the English territory in great force, he not only gave each soldier before marching to battle "a mighty draught of aquavitæ, wine, or old ale," but he killed his beef, fowl, and venison, in great plenty, to feast them on their return. His captains accused him of acting without foresight, for, said they, if victory should declare in favour of the enemy, all these good things would fall into their hands, and serve only to strengthen and encourage them; and, they added, that it would be a lamentable spec-

tacle to see "a sort of rogues" fed with such princely food. Sir Robert smiled: "Tush!" said he, "ye are too full of envy. This world is but an inn, in which ye have no special interest, but are only tenants at will of the Lord. If it please him to command us from it, as it were from our lodging, and to set other good fellows in our rooms, what hurt shall it be for us to leave them some meat for their suppers? Let them win it hardly and wear it. If they enter our dwellings, good manners would do no less than welcome them with such fare as the country breedeth, and with all my heart much good may it do them. Notwithstanding, I presume so far upon your bravery, that verily my mind giveth me we shall return at night and feast upon our own provisions." He was not deceived in his expectations, for they defeated the Irish, slew three thousand, and returned home with very little loss themselves.

The latter period of sir Thomas Rokeby's government, was devoted to important and useful reforms in the administration, and several ordinances were published, aimed chiefly against the "degeneracy" of the old English. One of these regulated more distinctly the forms and independence of the Irish parliament, and ordered that for the future it should take cognizance of erroneous proceedings in the king's courts in Ireland, instead of putting the inhabitants of that island to the trouble and expense of prosecuting a writ of error in England. Among the abuses denounced in the subsequent ordinances, are the intermarriage and fostering of the English with the Irish, which was an especial cause of the degeneracy complained of; the depredations committed by the kerns; and the various oppressions and extortions of the king's officers. And, with regard to the dissensions between the old and new English, these ordinances, after rehearsing that, although the English born in Ireland, as well as those born in England, were true Englishmen, living under the same dominion and sovereignty, and bound by the same laws, rights, and customs, yet various dissensions and "maintenances" had arisen among those of both races, and still greater were to be apprehended, enjoin that, in case of such dissensions, the lord justice, calling to him the chancellor and the treasurer of Ireland, with such nobles as he should think proper to call from the neighbouring districts, should diligently inquire into such dissensions, maintenances, and fac-

tions, and discover the names of those by whom they were supported, and, having caused due process to be made against the delinquents, should punish them by imprisonment, fine, or other such just infliction. Such dissensions, it is added, had a manifest tendency to lead the people into sedition and treason.

Other measures were subsequently pursued against the "degeneracy" of the English, which was now one of the evils that seem to have given most alarm to the government. At length, under the administration of the earl of Ormond, an attempt was made to strike at the root of this and some other grievances, by a far more stringent ordinance against the native Irish. It was ordered that no mere Irishman should be made a mayor, or bailiff, or porter, or other officer, of any town within the English dominion; and that no archbishop, bishop, abbot, prior, or other, under pain of the heaviest forfeit, should receive any mere Irishman, under plea of consanguinity or affinity, into canonical orders, or should promote or admit him to any ecclesiastical benefice among the English. This ordinance evidently had its motive in the embarrassments which such persons in office

had given to the government in the now increasing contentions with the native Irish. That it was immediately felt as a grievance where it was not intended to apply, is proved by a new writ issued by the king in the following year, and so far modifying it, that it was declared not to be intended to extend to any Irish clerks who had done service to the king or given proofs of their loyalty.

Of the short administration of Maurice fitz Gerald earl of Kildare, in 1360, it is incidentally recorded that he was appointed with the usual yearly salary of five hundred pounds, out of which he was expected to maintain nineteen horsemen besides himself. We are thus enabled to form some notion, if we make allowance for the great difference of the value of money at that time and in the present day, of the scale of expenditure on which the Irish government was supported.

The church establishment in Ireland was at this time disturbed by a "great variance," as it is termed in the chronicles, between Richard fitz Ralph archbishop of Armagh and the four orders of begging friars, which began in 1357, and ended by the death of the archbishop at Rome, where he had repaired to plead his cause, in 1360.

CHAPTER X.

CONTINUED WARS AMONG THE NATIVES; APPOINTMENT OF LIONEL DUKE OF CLARENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND; THE STATUTE OF KILKENNY.



HE whole period, the events of which, as far as related more especially to the English territory, are recorded in the foregoing chapter, was distinguished among the Irish by the same domestic commotions which we have been obliged so often to describe. Early in 1342, a new war broke out in Connaught between the O'Connors and the Mac Dermotts, in which Edmund de Burgh and his English again joined, marshalling themselves under the banner of the Mac Dermotts. As far as we can judge, different branches of the De Burghs, who

had become separated in their possessions and interests, fought on opposite sides in this war, and several of them were slain in a feud among themselves. Towards summer, the rebellion of the Mac Dermotts led to what the Irish annalists call "a general commotion" throughout Connaught. Turlough O'Connor had with difficulty made head against his numerous enemies, and had received one or two checks in the field, when his hopes were entirely destroyed by the defection of the influential clans of the Sioil Murray in Roscommon, who all joined the standard of Mac Dermott, and he was compelled to abandon his throne, and seek concealment from his enemies. In this distress, he determined to go secretly by night to the house or castle of the chief of his opponents,

Connor mac Dermott lord of Moylurg, and throw himself upon his generosity, in the hope of again detaching him from his league with the English and with the rival O'Connors. The latter, however, though he proceeded with so much caution that he gave no intimation of his intention even to Mac Dermott himself, obtained exact information of his design from some of his treacherous companions, and placed a strong body of their men in ambush, in one of the most dangerous passes, on the road leading to the fortress of Carrick. It appears that Turlough, to escape suspicion, took with him a much smaller escort than was expected, and he passed his enemies without being observed; but they soon discovered that their prey had escaped, and they pursued with all speed till they overtook him just before he reached "the causeway" of the fortress. Turlough O'Connor had but three companions, who bravely resisted their assailants, and, in the struggle, Cathal, the brother of Hugh O'Connor, who was the pretender to Turlough's throne, received a dangerous wound. They succeeded in thus defending themselves till the attention of Mac Dermott was attracted by their outcries, and he sent a party of his men to rescue them, and ferry them over the lake to his castle on the rock of Carrick. There he kept Turlough O'Connor under his protection during a whole week, while he consulted with his allies on the propriety of granting him their peace, and entering into a reconciliation. This, however, they absolutely refused, on which Mac Dermott sent his guest, under a safe conduct, escorted by a strong body of horse, to Roscommon, where they left him. The confederates then formally deposed Turlough O'Connor, and "on the first Monday of winter," elected Hugh O'Connor king of Connaught, and appointed another Hugh O'Connor heir to the kingdom. At the same time, the Mac Dermotts were allowed their reward, by being assisted in usurping the lands of some of Turlough's partizans in Tirerrill in Sligo.

Contemporary with this movement in Connaught, and perhaps not altogether unconnected with it, was a somewhat similar rebellion in Tirconnell, the chief of which district, Connor O'Donnell, was surprised by night in his fortress at Murbeach in Donegal, and slain there by his own brother, Niall O'Donnell, who thereupon assumed the chieftainship. Niall, however, did not long enjoy the fruits of his perfidy, for early next year

(1343) he was deposed in his turn by another of his family, Aongus O'Donnell, who was acknowledged chief in his place; and in an attempt to recover his superiority, Niall was defeated in a severe engagement in which several O'Donnells fell on both sides.

The spirit of domestic treason spread through the other Irish tribes. Murtough O'Brien of Thomond having died early in 1343, his rightful successor, Dermot O'Brien, had no sooner assumed the lordship than he was forcibly dispossessed of it by his kinsman Brian O'Brien. Early in 1344, the chieftain of the O'Melachlins in Meath was slain by his kinsman, who similarly usurped the chief power over his tribe. Changes and dissensions of the same kind occurred among the Mac Mahons in Orgial, and among the Mac Rannalls in Leitrim. This was followed by a sanguinary feud among the O'Neills of Tyrone.

Turlough O'Connor, with the assistance of the O'Rourkes of Breffny and the Mac Randalls, had been able to make some head in the north-east of Sligo. He was soon relieved of his great opponent Connor mac Dermott, who died towards the end of the year 1343, and was succeeded by his brother Fergal mac Dermott. Towards the end of the same year Turlough appears to have recovered his influence in Connaught, and to have been restored to the throne. Early in 1345 he was called upon to repay the services rendered him by the Mac Rannalls in his former need, by marching to assist them in a war with some of the neighbouring clans; and in the course of this expedition, while passing the wood of Fiodh-Daradha (the oak-wood), or Fedaro, in Leitrim, the king of Connaught was killed with an arrow, apparently not a usual weapon among the Irish, for the native annalists tell us "there had not been a greater exploit done by an arrow since Niall of the Nine Hostages was killed by Eochie mac Enna Kinseallagh at the Tyrranian seas." They add, that none of the Irish who had been slain for a long time was "a greater loss than he." He was succeeded by his son Hugh.

Roderic, son of Cathal O'Connor, whose possessions lay in the north of Connaught, was now distinguished as one of the most turbulent of his family. In the beginning of 1346, he was engaged in a sanguinary war with the O'Rourkes, in which the latter were defeated in a decisive battle near Lough Gill in Sligo. The feuds in this part of Ireland were now becoming more violent

than ever, especially among the Mac Rannalls of Leitrim, and the four sons of Cathal mac Rannall having been taken prisoners on Lough Seur by his rival Connor mac Rannall, were all savagely put to death. Soon after this, Niall O'Donnell, with some of the O'Connors and the Mac Dermotts, attacked Roderic O'Connor and his partizans in Sligo, defeated them in a great battle, and plundered their territory. This was followed during the next year by several acts of individual violence, in which some Mac Dermotts and others were slain. They were all connected more or less with the contentions of rival competitors for the chieftainship in the different districts, which broke out with greater fury in 1348. At the beginning of that year, Niall O'Donnell, who is described by the Irish annalists as "a tower of bravery, strength, and defence," and who had himself usurped the chieftainship of Tirconnell by violence, was slain at Ballyshannon by Manus O'Donnel, "treacherously and maliciously," and another O'Donnell, Aongus, who had been in rebellion against him, assumed the government. The same year Roderic O'Connor and the Mac Dermotts were engaged in open war, and O'Connor took and burnt the fortress of Fergal mac Dermott, the chief of the tribe. The latter, who appears to have been taken by surprise, collected his friends, pursued O'Connor, and captured his fortress at Ballymote in Sligo, and in revenge for the insult he had received from him, burnt the town, "both stone and wooden buildings," and returned home, after having set at liberty the son of O'Rourke and other prisoners. The last event of this year recorded by the annalists, is a feud between Edmund de Burgh and the Berminghams, in consequence of which the head of the Berminghams was obliged to fly for protection to the king of Connaught.

The earlier part of the year 1349 was distinguished by a sanguinary feud between the O'Rourkes and other clans in Leitrim, which was followed by another war between the Mac Dermotts and Roderic O'Connor. The chief of the Mac Dermotts, assisted by the English and by the Irish of Tirconnell, pursued Roderic O'Connor to Clan-Fermagh in Leitrim, but, unable to discover his place of concealment, they returned and dispersed, and then Roderic assembled his friends, entered suddenly into Moylurg, and burnt and plundered the greater part of the district. These repeated devastations exposed the country of the Mac Dermotts to

a still less merciful invader; for that celebrated black plague, which had already laid waste a great part of Europe, made its appearance in Ireland at this moment, and was felt with unusual severity in the district of Moylurg, where the Irish chronicles tell us that "an immense number" of people fell victims to its ravages.

In the latter part of the year 1349, the troubles among the Irish of Meath were so great as to require the presence of the lord justice, who defeated the O'Melachlins in a great battle, in which many of the Irish chieftains of Meath were slain. The next year saw a continuance of the petty feuds in various parts of the island, attended with the slaughter, openly or treacherously, of O'Connors, O'Rourkes, Mac Dermotts, O'Briens, and others. Among other such crimes, Roderic O'Connor, who had already been the cause of so many disorders, was slain in the Bracklieve mountains in the north of Roscommon, by the agents of Hugh O'Connor king of Connaught; and, immediately afterwards, the De Burghs and the people of the Tuathas rose up, and deposed the latter, and appointed another, Hugh, the son of Feidlim O'Connor, in his stead. Next year Hugh, son of Turlough, recovered his influence, re-assumed the chieftainship, and drove Hugh, the son of Feidlim, out of Connaught. This was followed by a new feud between the De Burghs and the Mac Dermotts. The narrative of these unchanging scenes of turbulence during this period is interrupted by a spectacle of a different character. The Irish annalists inform us that William the son of Donough Muimhneach O'Kelly, lord of Hy-Maine, gave a public and general invitation to "the colleges of Ireland," to all travellers, and to the poor and indigent, to a grand feast at Christmas of 1351, "and all classes, noble and ignoble, rich and poor, were abundantly entertained, and were perfectly satisfied with himself and his son Malachy." A poem in Irish in commemoration of this magnificent entertainment was composed by one of the bards whom O'Kelly's bounty and munificence had drawn to his house.

All the different feuds already alluded to, whether in Connaught, or Ulster, or Munster, were carried on with more or less intensity during several successive years. Hugh O'Connor had already, as we have seen, been reinstated in the chieftainship of Connaught; but in the different disorders to which that kingdom continued to be exposed during

the year 1352, Hugh O'Rourke, the chief of Breffny, and several of the chiefs of the clans in Roscommon, were slain. In 1353 Hugh was again deposed, but he seems, during the next three years, to have supported himself in vacillating but precarious power. In 1356, he fell a sacrifice to the vengeance of one of the O'Kellys of Hy-Maine, whose wife he had clandestinely carried away. The chieftainship of Connaught was then assumed by Hugh, the son of Feidlim O'Connor, one of his rivals; and under this prince the kingdom of Connaught appears to have been restored to comparative tranquillity. The first act of any importance after this period, recorded in the chronicles as having been performed by an O'Connor, is the building of "a bridge of stone and mortar," over the river at Ballysadare, by Cathal Oge O'Connor, in 1360. Next year Cathal Oge, having been attacked by the De Burghs, the De Berminghams, and others, retaliated by invading and devastating the territories of the English in Connaught.

The clans or septs between Connaught and Ulster were seldom tranquil, and their dissensions gave continual uneasiness to their neighbours on both sides. In 1352, the lord of Tirconnel, Aongus O'Donnell, was slain by Manus O'Donnell, and his successor, Feidlim O'Donnell, was immediately involved in a contest with Hugh O'Donnell, who aspired to the chieftainship. The power seems to have remained with the former, who maintained his ground till the year 1356, when he was slain by Hugh O'Donnell, who then assumed the sovereignty of his tribe without further opposition. He was subsequently engaged in hostilities with the O'Connors of Connaught, who defeated him with great slaughter in the spring of 1359.

The O'Neills of Tyrone were seldom at rest from their hostilities with the O'Neills of Clanaboy, who were generally assisted by the English, and these hostilities were frequently carried into the English settlements. In 1354, the people of Tyrone, under Hugh O'Neill, were defeated, with great slaughter, by the English of Dundalk and their Irish allies. In 1358, Hugh O'Neill gained a considerable advantage over his enemies in the south-east. These hostilities of the greater chieftains, as usual, dragged the lesser clans of the Mac Mahons, the O'Ferrolls, the Mac Rannalls, and others, into the same disorders.

In the south, the most formidable enemies

of public tranquillity were the O'Briens of Thomond. There was a revolution in that tribe also in 1360, which led to some turbulence. But the English had recently been occupied by enemies still nearer home, the Mac Murroughs and the O'Moores. In 1354, according to the Irish annalists, the chief of the former family was put to death by the English, which gave rise to a "great war" between the English and Irish in Leinster. And at the same time Roderic O'Moore lord of Leix was slain by his own kinsmen and household, in a revolution which appears to have raised to the chieftainship an O'Moore of a more enterprising character; for this chief is recorded to have gained a great victory over "the English of Dublin," in 1358, in which two hundred and forty of the latter were slain.

These disorders were rapidly gaining ground, and, combined with increasing neglect on the part of the English barons, were threatening the English government with further embarrassments, when the king, who had now again found leisure to turn his attention to Ireland, suddenly announced his intention of sending his third son, Lionel duke of Clarence, who, having married the daughter of the murdered earl of Ulster, had become in her right possessed of that earldom and the lordship of Connaught, as his deputy to assume the government. Writs were issued, summoning all who held possessions in Ireland to appear before the king and his council, personally or by proxy, to concert measures for the defence and preservation of Ireland; the reasons assigned for this measure being the increased violence of the incursions of the Irish enemy, the inability of his subjects resident in Ireland to make head against their aggressions, and the absence of so many great English proprietors, who drew the revenues from their Irish estates to support themselves in luxury in England, while they contributed nothing towards their defence. Among the absentees made to contribute on this occasion we find the names of several great ladies, among whom are those of the countesses of Norfolk and Pembroke, and the ladies Margery de Roos and Anne le Despenser.

A small army of fifteen hundred men was soon assembled, and with this force, having under him the earls of Stafford and Ormond, Sir John Carew, who had already filled the office of chief governor of Ireland, and sir William de Windsor, who was subsequently

appointed to it, the prince proceeded to Ireland, and reached Dublin on the 15th of September, 1361. He carried with him to his new government all those prejudices against the "old English" which his father seemed so strongly to have imbibed; and when, almost immediately after his arrival, he raised his standard to march into Munster against the turbulent O'Brien, he publicly announced his determination to dispense entirely with the services of the Anglo-Irish barons, by causing a proclamation to be made that none of the old English should be allowed even to approach his camp. The disgust caused among the latter by this ungenerous insult was great, and they all naturally kept away, and left the prince to pursue his plan under the guidance of his own advisers, and assisted only by the king's subjects of English birth.

The consequences of this measure were soon felt by the English army. The prince marched forwards into the heart of Thomond without guidance or intelligence, embarrassed continually by the unforeseen difficulties of the country, and suffering from the rapid and desultory attacks of the natives, for which his English soldiers were ill suited and unprepared. He thus lost many of his men in the slow course of his march; an advanced party was attacked by the enemy, and defeated with considerable loss; and his own soldiers, discouraged by the hardships to which they were exposed, began to desert and go over to the Irish. Conscious now of the gravity of his position, and of the error which had led him into it, the duke of Clarence issued in all haste a new proclamation, requiring the king's subjects in Ireland of the old English race to lose no time in joining his standard. The latter were too well aware of the danger to which their own property was exposed by the embarrassments of the prince, to expose him to any further danger, and they crowded to his camp in such numbers, that the forces of O'Brien were soon dispersed. The Irish were repressed in other quarters. Art mac Murrough, who had assumed the title of king of Leinster, and his heir, were seized in Mac Murrough's own residence, and carried prisoners to Dublin castle, in which they both died, put to death, according to some accounts, by their gaoilers. Provoked at the hostility of the English on their borders, who had been encouraged by their successes to make depredations on the Irish of Connaught, king Hugh O'Connor and his

heir Cathal Oge next year led an innumerable horde of Irish into Meath, and after committing great havoc, in the course of which their own annalists boast that they plundered Kilkenny, and burnt no less than fourteen churches in which the English had taken refuge, returned home without any serious molestation.

On his return to Dublin, after the expedition against O'Brien, the duke of Clarence held his court there with some pomp, and conferred the honour of knighthood on many of his followers, making no distinction between those of the old and new English race. By this affectation of impartiality, and by some other acts, he so far conciliated the Anglo-Irish, that both clergy and laity agreed in giving him two years' revenue of all their lands and tithes towards the maintenance of the Irish war, which, however, was carried on feebly and led to no important results. This prince is said to have effected a great reformation in the discipline of the English army in Ireland. One of his most important acts was the removal of the exchequer to Carlow, on the walling of which town he expended five hundred pounds. After having held the government three years, he was recalled in 1364, and the earl of Ormond was appointed to remain as lord deputy. The dissensions which had been gaining ground between the old and new English had now risen to such a height that the king was obliged to send an express ordinance against them, according to which any English subject, whether born in England or Ireland, who should be found guilty of causing or abetting such dissensions, was to be punished by imprisonment for two years.

At the time of the prince's departure, new troubles broke out in Tyrone and Tirconnell, which threatened the peace of the English settlements in the north, and the chiefs of Ulster were soon involved in hostilities with the O'Connors of Connaught. Sanguinary revolutions, such as had so often occurred in the course of the previous years, happened at nearly the same time among the Mac Rannalls of Leitrim and the Mac Carthys of Desmond, and added to the general disorder. These were followed in the same year by a desperate feud among the English families of the De Burghs in Connaught, which marked the close of the year 1366. These troubles continued with little relaxation during the following year, and in the beginning of 1368 Hugh O'Connor king of Connaught died, and was suc-

ceeded without opposition by Roderick the son of Turlough O'Connor.

The unsettled state of the English province appears in the circumstance that during these three years the duke of Clarence was twice sent over to re-assume the government. The second of these missions was the only one commemorated by any important act. It is evident that the government was most embarrassed by its subjects of English extraction, especially by those who had formed alliances with the Irish, and had wholly or partially conformed to their manners and customs; and in 1367, the prince called a general parliament at Kilkenny, in which the two estates—the peers and commons—sat together, and zealously entered upon the consideration of the causes of so much disorder. They passed together a celebrated ordinance, since known by the title of the **STATUTE OF KILKENNY**, which was aimed chiefly against the “degenerate” English just alluded to, although it contained also some strong enactments against the Irish themselves, which breathe the same hostile and jealous spirit that pervaded the whole course of the early legislation of the English with regard to Ireland.

This statute, so often renewed and confirmed in later times, and quoted by future legislators for its salutary tendency and effect, began by stating that the English in Ireland, before the arrival of Lionel duke of Clarence, had so far degenerated as to have become little better than mere Irish in their language, names, dress, and manner of living; and that they had rejected the English laws, and taken in their place those of the Irish, with whom they allied themselves more closely by intermarriage, to the ruin of the general weal. It was therefore enacted, that marriage with the natives, or any connection in the way of fostering or gossiping, should be considered and punished as high treason. It was further decreed, that if any man of English race should adopt an Irish name, the Irish language, or the costume of the Irish, or any other mode or custom peculiar to them, he should forfeit his lands and tenements until he had given security in the court of chancery to conform in all particulars to the manners of the English, or, if he had no goods, he should be imprisoned till he gave such security. It pronounced the Brehon law to be a lewd and pernicious custom crept in of later days among the English; and directed that all controversies should be judged by the com-

mon law of England, and that those who submitted to Irish jurisdiction were to be considered guilty of high treason. Another article of this statute contained an express prohibition against levying war upon the Irish without a special warrant from the government. The system of private warfare thus proscribed, which had arisen from the peculiar tenures under which the English barons became possessed of their estates, had all along been one of the greatest evils with which the English government had to contend. Heavy penalties were likewise denounced against the English who permitted their Irish neighbours to graze on their lands, to the English ecclesiastics who presented their clergy to church benefices, or who received their monks into religious houses, and to all who entertained their bards, rhymers, or news-tellers. The object of this prohibition was to hinder that sort of intercourse which, it was believed, led to the “degeneracy” complained of, and, to explain it, it may be necessary to state, that the minstrels of the middle ages, in all countries, from their wandering life, and the respect with which they were everywhere received, were not only the great carriers of news from one place to another, but they often carried secret intelligence, and were the bearers of private messages, and acted no little part in the numerous petty intrigues of the time. Other enactments in this statute struck at the odious oppression of coyne and livery; at the improper use made of royal franchises and liberties, in allowing them to serve as sanctuaries for malefactors; at the unequal levying of military service; and some other abuses. The statute of Kilkenny was promulgated with especial solemnity, and all who should presume to violate it were threatened with the anathema of the church. It appears for a while to have had a tranquillizing effect, for, from this time, the king's writ ran even in Ulster and Connaught, and the revenues of those two provinces were regularly accounted for in the exchequer.

After the close of this important parliament, the duke of Clarence left Ireland for the last time, and was succeeded the same year (1367) in the government of Ireland by Gerald fitz Maurice earl of Desmond, who received the old title and office of lord justice. The chief embarrassment experienced by the administration of this young nobleman arose from the turbulence of the De Berminghams, with whom he was

obliged to treat as though they had been independent chieftains. This governor, who from his love of poetry was popularly called "the poet," appears indeed to have possessed few of the sterner requisites of his office, and as troubles seemed to be gathering on every side, he was replaced, in 1369, by sir William de Windsor, who came with the higher title of lord-lieutenant, and whose mission appears to have been attended with great expectations. He was not himself of the old English race, but he appears to have enjoyed the reputation of having gained great experience of the state of Ireland during his attendance on the duke of Clarence. On his arrival he found the whole island in a state of disorder. A violent commotion had arisen among the O'Reillys in Breffny, in which the O'Connors as usual interfered, and the chieftain of the tribe had been deposed and thrown into prison in the castle of Lough Oughter in the county of Cavan, by one of his kinsmen. The Mac Guires of Fermanagh made common cause with the fallen chieftain, took the castle in which he was confined in a sudden attack, and, having thus set him at liberty, assisted him in recovering the sovereignty of his tribe. The spirit of discord soon spread to the O'Donnells and to the O'Rourkes; and a new chieftain, Brian O'Brien, having assumed the lordship of Thomond, began immediately to threaten the tranquillity of the English possessions in Munster. Of late years the O'Connors and the O'Briens had frequently acted in concert against the English, and they were now entering again into a confederacy which was calculated to excite considerable alarm. On the arrival of the new lord-lieutenant, he called a parliament at Kilkenny, and obtained a subsidy of three thousand pounds, and in a subsequent session two thousand more were granted, for the purpose of carrying on the war against the Irish.

It was nearer home, however, that sir William de Windsor was first called to make use of his arms. The septs of Leinster, (whose chief, or king as they called him, who possessed the same name as the king of Leinster by whose treason the English were first brought into the island, Dermot mac Murrough, had been long a prisoner in Dublin castle,) suddenly broke out into open insurrection. The family of the Mac Murroughs, who had thus assumed the chieftainship of Leinster, and who will soon be found rising into still greater importance, traced their descent in a direct line from the Donald

Kavenagh or Cavenagh, who acted so prominent a part in the first English invasion. According to the Irish annalists, Gerald Cavenagh, the heir presumptive to the chieftainship, was in 1369 slain by "the black knight," who is described by another writer as "one of the English of Dublin;" and the same authorities inform us that Dermot mac Murrough was taken from his prison and put to death. We are not told if these events were the incitement to the insurrection of the Irish of Leinster, or whether it was the consequence of their rebellion. The latter was soon repressed, but the lord lieutenant was called off to an attack of a more formidable character.

Brian O'Brien, encouraged and assisted by O'Connor of Connaught, had openly raised his standard against the English, and was already devastating their lands. The first who made head against them was Gerald earl of Desmond, but the small body of men he was enabled to raise to meet so sudden an emergency, were too few to stem the torrent, and he was entirely defeated in a battle near Mayo; Desmond himself with several of the Fitz Gerald, were taken prisoners—some say, slain, on this occasion, and the Irish of Thomond overran the country without opposition, captured Limerick, and gave it to the keeping of one of the Mac Namaras, a tribe who had joined them in the war. The city had probably been taken by surprise; for, according to the Irish accounts, the citizens soon afterwards rose against their Irish governor and slew him. When the English army under the lord-lieutenant arrived on the scene of desolation, the Irish of Thomond had retired into their fastnesses out of his reach, and he was left to wreak his vengeance on some of the petty chieftains of the plain. This was the constant system of Irish warfare, which had given so much trouble to troops that were not fully masters of the country; the natives rushed from the mountains when their enemies were off their guard, devastated and plundered the plains with inconceivable rapidity, and carried off the booty to their strongholds before a sufficient force could be assembled to intercept them. The English government now tried a new policy, by taking some of the native clans into pay, as a safeguard against the others; but delay in the payment, or other causes, furnished so many occasions for complaint and dissatisfaction, that these new allies were soon found to be more troublesome than the

enemies against whom they were intended as a guard.

In 1371, sir William de Windsor was succeeded in the government of Ireland by Maurice earl of Kildare, who held the office of lord deputy during one year. The duties attached to that office had become so onerous, and the troubles among Irish and English had increased to such an alarming degree, that it was now found difficult to persuade a man of sufficient rank and abilities to accept it. In the course of one year, 1372, three successive rulers were appointed, sir Robert de Assheton, Ralph de Cheney, and Thomas Tany, prior of Kilmainham. The second of these had, it appears, relinquished his office in despair, the prior of Kilmainham being a mere temporary substitute; and when sir Richard Pembridge, warden of the English Cinque Ports, was called upon to undertake the government of Ireland, he positively refused; and it was adjudged that his refusal was strictly legal, insomuch as even so high an appointment in Ireland was to be considered no better than an honourable exile, and it was decided that no man could be forced by law to abandon his country, except in the case of abjuration for felony or by act of parliament. Unable to find any other fit deputy, the king was at length, early in 1374, obliged to send back sir William de Windsor. This deputy had been accused of several unconstitutional acts during his former administration, arising chiefly from the unruly character of his parliaments; but these were overlooked, and the king, in the hope that he would be able to effect important services, consented to allow him for the expenses of his government upwards of eleven thousand pounds yearly, a sum exceeding the whole revenue of Ireland at that time, which, according to sir John Davies, amounted to an annual sum of about ten thousand pounds. It was also proclaimed anew that all absentees holding lands in Ireland should repair thither immediately to assist in the defence of the country, or send competent men for that purpose, on pain of forfeiting their estates.

All these preparations were, however,

attended with small fruits. Sir William de Windsor could get no better intelligence of the haunts of his Irish enemies than before, and he was obliged to follow his old system of pensioning some native chiefs on the English borders to keep watch on the others; and in this way he sustained the more pompous title now given him of lord custos or keeper of Ireland. Next year he surrendered his office to the earl of Kildare, who was succeeded in 1376 by James earl of Ormond.

The last year of Edward's reign was occupied with constitutional disputes between the king and his Anglo-Irish subjects. The English parliament and the English monarch were equally dissatisfied that such large sums of money should be annually expended on the government of Ireland, and an agent was sent over to represent the necessities of the state, and to demand a liberal subsidy from an Irish parliament. The parliament was called in 1376, but it pleaded poverty, and refused the supplies. The king thereupon issued his writs to the clergy and laity, summoning them to send representatives to his parliament at Westminster to consult on the state of the realm. With much unwillingness, and after throwing a variety of difficulties in the way, the Irish deputies were sent; but both estates pleaded, that according to their liberties they were not bound to send any persons from the land of Ireland to attend a parliament in England. It must be remembered that at this time the sending members to parliament entailed a heavy burthen, which every one was desirous of escaping. We know that the Irish representatives on this occasion sat at Westminster, and that their wages were levied on the dioceses, counties, and boroughs which had chosen them.

One of the last notices relating to Ireland during this reign is an entry on the issue roll of the exchequer for 1376, which bears a significant character. Richard Dere and William Stapolyn came over to England to inform the king how badly Ireland was governed, and received for their trouble a reward of ten pounds.

CHAPTER XI.

TRoubLED STATE OF IRELAND DURING THE LATTER YEARS OF THE REIGN OF EDWARD III. AND THE BEGINNING OF THAT OF RICHARD II.



WHILE misgovernment in Ireland was thus increasing, the English power in that country was becoming more weakened beneath the constant attacks of the Irish in every quarter. We have only to cast our eye over the entries in the Irish rolls of this period, to be convinced of the utter insecurity of property in the very heart of the English pale, no part of which was free from the incursions of the Irish. A cessation of the feuds which had agitated that district for many years, strengthened the power of the O'Neills of Tyrone at the beginning of 1370, and enabled them to turn all their forces against the English settlements in Ulster. Next year, the English were driven out of the territory of Tireragh in Sligo, and their lands taken possession of by the Irish. In 1372, the English were attacked by the Mac Mahons of Orgial, and in Galway the De Berminghams were defeated by the O'Kellys. In 1373, the English were defeated in Meath by the O'Ferralls and the O'Melachlins; they recovered their superiority next year, but they were severely defeated in Ulster by Niall O'Neill, and they received a still more signal defeat from this chieftain in 1375. During these years, Leinster was continually ravaged by the incursions of its Irish septs, whose king, Donagh Cavenagh mac Murrrough, was slain by the English in the year last mentioned, and, at the same time, an invasion of the Mac Tiarnans of Cavan was disastrous to the Irish, through the treachery, as it is said, of one of themselves, who betrayed them to the English for a bribe, and they were surrounded, and five and twenty of their chiefs taken and beheaded by the English on the spot. The annals of the next few years are but a repetition of similar events, and the accession of a new monarch to the throne of England, in 1377, seems to have had no effect on the condition of Ireland.

Richard II. retained the earl of Ormond as his lord justice during the first year of

his reign, and during the two succeeding years the office was held by men of no great importance. A feeling of mutual discontent, which had its rise in the latter part of the late reign, continued to be evinced between the English of the two islands. The English parliament complained of the extravagant and unnecessary expenditure of money required to maintain the king's Irish dominions; while the English in Ireland were equally indignant at the increasing number of the nobility and gentry who quitted their Irish lands to reside in England, and left an inadequate force to protect the English possessions. An attempt was made to remedy this grievance by a new law, which ordained that the absentees should either repair in person to their Irish lands, or send men able to provide for their defence, or be taxed to the amount of two-thirds of their Irish revenues, to be applied to the service of that kingdom, an exception being made in favour of those immediately engaged in the king's service, students of the universities, and those absent by license under the great seal of England, the latter to be taxed only one-third of their revenues. As a further encouragement to his Irish subjects, the king this year (1379) granted them the liberty to dig for mines, requiring the payment into his exchequer of only a ninth of their produce; the power of coining money at the royal mint in Dublin; and a free trade in wines and other merchandize with Portugal. So urgent was the call for some kind of remedy for the evils under which the island now suffered, that about the same time sir Nicholas Dagworth was sent by the king to Ireland to enquire concerning the estate and government of the land, and of the means at disposal for its protection.

It was at this time that the great family of the Mortimers of Wigmore became first intimately connected with Ireland. Edmund de Mortimer earl of March, by his marriage with Philippa daughter of Lionel duke of Clarence and Elizabeth de Burgh heiress of the murdered earl of Ulster, became possessed of this latter title and of the immense Irish estates attached to it. In 1380, this

nobleman was sent over to Ireland as lord-lieutenant. His brief administration was only distinguished by one event of importance. The fleets of the French and Spaniards, with whom the king of England was then at war, had frequently molested the Irish coast; at length a number of French and Spanish galley were driven by the English fleet into the harbour of Kinsale, where they were attacked and defeated by the English and Irish, all their chief captains taken, and four hundred of their sailors slain. On the death of Edmund de Mortimer in 1381, the prelates, barons, and commons of Ireland assembled at Cork, and there elected John Colton, then chancellor of Ireland but afterwards archbishop of Armagh, to succeed him; and their choice being approved by the king, this eminent ecclesiastic was appointed lord justice. But he had only held the office a few weeks, when he was called upon to resign it into the hands of the youthful son of the deceased nobleman, Roger de Mortimer, who was appointed lord-lieutenant, and, being under age, his uncle and guardian, sir Thomas de Mortimer, chief justice of the common pleas in England, was appointed deputy lieutenant to administer the affairs of Ireland in his name.

The inconvenience of this administration appears to have been soon felt, and the king's cousin, Philip de Courtenay, who held large estates in Ireland, was sent over to take the office of lord-lieutenant in 1383. This man, presuming on his relationship to the English monarch, and on the grant of his office by letters patent for ten years, is said to have committed all kinds of oppression and injustice, until the council of regency in England, informed of his misconduct, sent an order to place him under arrest, and he was not only deprived of his office, but he was severely punished for his maladministration.

King Richard was now arrived at an age when he could impress his personal influence on the government of the country, and he soon exhibited that weakness and unsteadiness of character which subsequently drew upon him such great misfortunes. In 1385, he conferred upon his early favourite, Robert de Vere earl of Oxford, the high title of marquis of Dublin and duke of Ireland, and he bestowed upon him the entire sovereignty of that island during life, as fully and perfectly as it had been held by the king himself or any of his ancestors. The lands and towns formerly reserved to the crown, as well as the hereditary estates of

the nobles and barons of Ireland, was excepted in the grant; but in other respects he was to enjoy the entire sovereignty of the island, was to appoint the officers of state and justice in his own name, had authority to conquer all the territory which was still in the hands of the Irish, and to be vested in his own person with all the lands he should gain by his arms. The parliament confirmed the king's grant, and five hundred men at arms and a thousand archers were granted him for two years, to assist in carrying out the great projects of conquest and pacification he was presumed to entertain.

The king accompanied his favourite as far as Wales in great pomp, but there his mind suddenly changed, and, unwilling or unable to bear the separation, he returned with him to London, and the government of Ireland was committed to his deputies, of whom sir John Stanley was the first. The dominion and possessions in Ireland were confirmed to the favourite by a new grant for life, and the acts of the Irish government continued to be executed in his name, under the title of marquis of Dublin, for he appears never to have used that of duke of Ireland.

For the internal state of Ireland at this period our sole information is found in the native chronicles, and these are exceedingly partial and imperfect, recording only some of the Irish domestic feuds, most of their successes against the English, and a few of their more remarkable defeats. A mere selection of the events thus commemorated, taken in the order in which they occur during the five years which preceded the appointment of the "duke of Ireland," will give the best notion of the condition in which his deputy found the island.

In 1380, a new and violent revolution occurred in Tireconnell; the chieftain John O'Donnell lay encamped near the monastery of Ballyshannon, when he was attacked in the night by his rival Turlough O'Donnell, assisted by the O'Connors of Sligo, and, taken by surprise, was slain along with his son and many of his friends. Another victory over the partizans of the family of the late chief established Turlough O'Donnell's power. In Connaught, there was war between the O'Connors, the O'Reillys, and the O'Rourkes, and between the different branches of the De Burghs and the De Exeters in Mayo. Intestine war also produced fatal effects among the O'Briens of Thomond. The Irish of the county of Down

in the north, are recorded to have given the English "an awful overthrow." Yet, perhaps to pacify the anger of the government, when Edmund de Mortimer arrived in Ireland soon after this event, O'Neill, with several of the chiefs of Ulster and Meath, waited upon him as a mark of obedience and homage. Nevertheless, shortly after, Art mac Gennis of Down, the leader of the Irish who had thus defeated the English, was "treacherously taken prisoner at the residence of Mortimer," in consequence of which, according to the annalist, the Irish and many of the English put no further confidence in him. In consequence of their open disaffection, the lord deputy marched into Ulster with an army, and ravaged the country into the heart of Tyrone. Troubles in Leinster, of a less formidable character, led to the slaughter of two chiefs of the Mac Murroughs.

Next year Niall O'Neill retaliated by marching into Orgial; but the attention of Edmund de Mortimer was called off to a new war in Connaught, and he took the castle of Athlone from the Irish a short time before his death. The disorders among the Irish themselves had meanwhile spread to the south, and extended themselves to the Mac Carthys and the neighbouring clans.

In 1382, the chief of the Mac Geoghegans in Westmeath was slain in a feud in which the English of the district participated; the war in Connaught was prolonged, and raged with great fury on the northern frontier; and the O'Briens invaded Desmond, and carried away much booty. Early in the year following, Niall O'Neill, and the people of Tyrone, invaded the English possessions in Ulster, and were resisted by the Savages; it is recorded that Hugh O'Neill and Raibilin Savage, encountering in the heat of the engagement, ran each other through with their lances, and both died of their wounds. The heir to the chieftainship of the Mac Murroughs was slain by the English in the county of Wexford. A fatal plague raged through Ireland during this and the following years; and among the numerous chiefs and men of distinction carried off by it were, in 1383, Art mac Gennis, who had remained a prisoner in the castle of Trim ever since his capture by Mortimer, and, in 1384, Roderic O'Connor king of Connaught. The different clans in that province elected two rival successors, and a war arose out of their contending claims, which troubled the whole of Connaught during the remainder of the

year. Several sanguinary frays occurred between rival clans in other parts of the island; and the power of Niall O'Neill arose so high that he made himself master of Carrickfergus, and burnt it. In Connaught, the great family of the O'Connors had become gradually divided into the two branches of the O'Connors Don, or the brown O'Connors, and the O'Connors Roe, or the red O'Connors, who were perpetually at war with each other, and when their personal hostilities were appeased in the south, they were still carried on in the north among the clans of Sligo and Mayo, who were their partizans. In the beginning of 1385, the O'Rourkes of Leitrim and the Mac Donoghs of Sligo joined in invading Moylurg, the territory of the Mac Dermotts, whose fortress they burnt. Some of the O'Connors and the Mac Dermotts, in revenge, marched into Tirerrill, and committed great slaughter and havoc, and the leader of the Mac Dermotts was taken prisoner, and some chiefs of the Mac Donoghs and O'Connors slain or severely wounded. The O'Connors of the party of the O'Connor Roe, with their allies, the Mac Dermotts, in another attack, captured two chiefs of the O'Connors of the other party, and imprisoned them in the castle of the Rock of Lough Key in Roscommon. At the same time O'Connor Roe himself, with the chieftain of the Mac Dermotts, invaded Hy-Maine, and burnt "the town" of Edmund O'Kelly. On the other hand, the men of Breffny, and the people of Tirerrill in Sligo, who were partizans of O'Connor Don, entered the territory of his enemies, burnt many of their towns, and destroyed their crops. The De Burghs of Sligo, who seem to have taken the same side, burnt Tirerragh and Sligo, and had set fire to Carbury, when they met with a severe check from the clans allied with the opposite party. In the midst of these turmoils, the English of Meath, who appear to have interfered in the disputes among the Irish, were defeated, with great loss, by O'Connor of Offaly and the Mac Geoghegans.

In the summer of 1385, the war in Connaught seemed appeased by a general and voluntary pacification, and O'Connor Don and O'Connor Oge agreed to divide their paternal territory, that of the Siol-Murray in Roscommon, between them. During the rest of the year, the only remaining traces of this great strife consisted of a feud between the O'Connors and the Mac Donoghs, in which the English of the district took part

with the former. This led to a new and more extensive war in the year following, in which the O'Connors and the De Burghs were each divided on different sides. It ended, after considerable turmoil, in a new pacification, and the O'Connors and the De Burghs were again reconciled. The reconciliation between the former was, as usual, of short continuance, for next year the war between O'Connor Don and O'Connor Roe was carried on with savage violence, and the counties of Roscommon and Sligo were exposed to repeated plunderings by the contending factions.

Meanwhile, in the north, Niall O'Neill of Tyrone increased in power, and assumed the title of king of Ulster. In 1387, it is recorded that he founded a house of general entertainment and support for the learned men of Ireland at Armagh. He seems to have been allowed to hold his acquisitions in peace, with the exception of a desultory warfare between the clans on his border and their English neighbours.

When sir John Stanley arrived in Ireland in 1385, as the deputy of king Richard's favourite, he renewed, in the name of the new temporary sovereign of Ireland, the treaty with Mac Murrough of Leinster, who was paid a pension for keeping the peace; and we have no record of any other action of the English governors during the next few years that cast much more glory on their years of office. The evils of absenteeism increased daily in the English pale, which is said to have been almost depopulated by the number of persons who left their estates to reside in greater security in England. The old laws were renewed, and fresh proclamations were issued, to compel the fugitives to return, but in vain; and while the Irish were gradually trespassing more and more on the English possessions, the English parliament was continually making new grants for the assistance of Ireland, which were as invariably turned by the king to other purposes. Yet in the midst of so much evident weakness on the part of the English government, we find Niall O'Neill of Ulster, and his sons, in the height of their power, sending their submission in writing to sir John Stanley, when he again held the office of deputy in 1389, renouncing all claim to the "bonaght," or extraordinary taxation of Ulster, and giving oaths and hostages for their future allegiance. Perhaps, with a foresight which convinced them that their power was precarious and that the English would eventually recover

their superiority, they thought they would by this measure secure to themselves the protection of the English government in retaining all the possessions they held at that moment. Yet three years after, we find king O'Neill fighting a great battle against the English of Traghally and Dundalk, and, according to the Irish annalist, bringing these districts under subjection. Subsequently to this event, in the same year, 1392, the O'Neills invaded Tirconnell, in conjunction with the O'Connors of Sligo.

In this part of the island a desolating warfare had been carried on for several years between the O'Connors, O'Reillys, O'Rourkes, O'Ferralls, and various other clans, which had been felt more or less by all the districts around. The O'Donnells of Tirconnell, who a few years before had been the terror of this part of the island, were weakened by the rising into independence of the clans of the north of Connaught, who had formerly acknowledged their supremacy. In 1389, some of the O'Connors of Sligo had invaded Tirconnell, and plundered a considerable district apparently without resistance. The O'Donnells had probably received many provocations in the course of the great disorders in these parts which distinguished the years 1390 and 1391. O'Donnell appears to have been disabled from revenging these injuries by his own domestic troubles, for there was a rival O'Donnell in the field. John O'Donnell, this was the rival's name, was in league with Henry O'Neill, one of the Kinel-Connell chiefs, on one side, and with the O'Connors of Sligo on the other. Turlough O'Donnell, the chief of Tirconnell, provoked by some injury from the former, attacked him early in 1392, and took his son Donal O'Neill prisoner. On this, John O'Donnell, who appears to have been alarmed by Turlough's vigorous proceeding, invited in the O'Neills and the O'Connors, and it was on this occasion that the king of Ulster, as he called himself, took part with his kinsman Henry O'Neill, and joined in the war. Niall O'Neill and the army of Ulster thus marched into Tirconnell on the one side, while the O'Connors entered it on the other, and the inhabitants followed their old system of defence by retiring into the mountains and inaccessible parts with their cattle, while O'Donnell and his army remained to defend the country. The imminence of the danger seems to have aroused all the warlike spirit of the tribe, and O'Donnell showed no want

of courage in opposing this formidable confederacy. The men of Connaught marched onward without stopping till they reached Ceanm-Maghair near Ballyshannon, where they began to plunder. It was against this attack that O'Donnell had marched first, and he fell upon them while they were engaged in collecting their booty, defeated them with great slaughter, and compelled them to retire from his territory. He then turned to meet the O'Neills and the people of Tyrone, who were busily occupied in plundering the territory of the subordinate clan of the O'Doghertys, where they spared not even the churches and religious buildings. When they heard of O'Donnell's approach, they collected their scattered forces, and marched to meet him to a place called Fearsad More, where the two armies remained for some time in presence without engaging, neither party being willing to commence. O'Neill was probably discouraged at the ill-success of his allies from Connaught, while O'Donnell was unwilling to involve himself in a more serious war with so powerful an antagonist as Niall O'Neill. At length they began to talk instead of fight, and they ended by concluding a peace and alliance between the O'Donnells and the O'Neills.

The O'Connors were too much occupied with their feuds at home to attempt to revenge themselves upon O'Donnell, for the feud between the two great chiefs of that family had broken out anew, and was not pacified till late in 1393, when a new arrangement was made for the division of their patrimony in Roscommon.

In the south, the Irish became more and more troublesome to the English government by their increasing power and turbulence. When, on the death of the duke of Ireland in exile at Louvain, James third earl of Ormond was made lord justice in 1392, his

whole attention was instantly called to the suppression of the turbulent septs of Leinster, and soon after his appointment he fought a pitched battle at a place called Tascoffin, in the county of Kilkenny, in which he slew six hundred of the Irish. The power of the Mac Murroughs was increased to such a degree, that, under a chief of great skill and courage, who now ruled them and claimed the ancient crown of Leinster, Art mac Murrough, they gave great uneasiness to the English government. Early in 1394, Art mac Murrough made a sudden inroad on the English of Wexford, and burnt Old Ross, "with its houses and castles," carrying away with him, according to the annalists, gold, silver, and hostages. The lord justice immediately marched against him from Dublin, but appears to have done little more than devastate the lands of the Irish who had given assistance to the insurgents, while the latter had taken refuge in their fastnesses. When the English army retired, they returned to continue their depredations.

But they were now brought in presence of a new and more formidable enemy. The state of Ireland continued to give the greatest anxiety to the English court, and a variety of expedients had been tried, or talked of, for its relief. At length, in 1393, it was determined to send a nobleman combining at the same time the most exalted rank and the vigour and talents which seemed equal to the difficulties he had to contend with, to assume the government of that unfortunate country, and Thomas of Woodstock duke of Gloucester, the king's uncle, was appointed lord-lieutenant. This great man was already preparing to embark with an army, when a royal order reached him to countermand the appointment, and to announce the king's sudden determination to proceed to Ireland in person.

CHAPTER XII.

KING RICHARD'S FIRST AND SECOND VISITS TO IRELAND.



ON the 2nd of October, 1394, king Richard II, landed at Waterford, with an army of four thousand men at arms, and thirty thousand archers. He was attended by his uncle the duke of Gloucester, the earls of Nottingham and Rutland, Thomas lord Percy, and other persons of distinction. After a very brief stay at Waterford, he marched overland to Dublin, at the head of this imposing force.

The Irish, although they had been of late more than usually successful in the sort of desultory warfare which they carried on with the English settlers, were never in a condition less calculated for opposing a regular army like that which now presented itself before them. The power of the great chieftains had everywhere fallen away by the breaking up of their states among the numerous clans who had formerly acknowledged their power, but who now asserted their independence. The O'Briens were restricted within comparatively narrow limits; the O'Connors had for years been the slaves of domestic factions; O'Neill, who had preserved the greatest appearance of authority, was only capable of carrying on warfare on a small scale; and both he and Mac Murrough of Leinster owed their importance chiefly to the temporary weakness of the government with which they had to contend.

When they first heard of the arrival of king Richard they fled into the natural fortresses which the character of their country supplied, and they presumed on the security thus afforded them to attack detached parties of the English army. "Ireland," says Froissart, who gives us the description of king Richard's first visit to that island, "is one of the evil countries of the world to make war upon, or to bring under subjection, for it is strongly and widely enclosed with lofty forests, and great waters and marshes, and uninhabitable places; it is hard to enter in so as to do them of the country any damage. Thus ye shall find no town or person to speak with, for the men draw to the woods,

and dwell in caves and small cottages, under trees, and among bushes and hedges, like wild savage beasts." "A man of arms," he adds, "be he never so well horsed, and let him run as fast he can, the Irishmen will run on foot as fast as he, and overtake him, yea, and leap upon his horse behind him, and drag him from it."

The chiefs, however, soon perceived the policy of averting the anger of the king of England by a timely submission. The example was set by those most distant from the immediate scene of danger, and was soon followed by the rest. A formal letter from Niall O'Neill and the other chiefs of Ulster met the king on his way, and announced to him their willingness to appear before him in person and make their submission; and they laid their recent hostility to the charge of his English governors and officers, who had compelled them to take up arms in self-defence by repeated oppressions and injuries. Upon this, the king, flattered at the effect which his presence had produced on the most powerful chief in Ireland at that time, left the septs of Leinster to make their peace with his deputies, and showed his sense of the voluntary proceeding of O'Neill, by hastening to Drogheda to meet the princes of Ulster. There they performed their homage and took their oaths of fealty with the fullest forms, falling on their knees, and laying aside their caps, arms, and girdles, after which they were received to the kiss of peace. They then bound themselves by formal indentures, under heavy penalties, which were to be payable in the apostolic chamber, to be for ever the king's liege men, and to serve him in his wars against all the Irish who might hereafter rise against him. O'Neill, as king of Ulster, further bound himself to restore to the English earl of Ulster the "bonaght" or tax of that province.

When he marched thus hastily towards the north, the king left the earl marshal of England, Mowbray earl of Nottingham, with a portion of his army, especially commissioned to receive the homage and oaths of fealty of the Irish septs of Leinster. The earl raised his standard in the open plain at

Balligory near Carlow, and there came Art mac Murrough, with Mac Carthy, and a number of other chiefs of the south, who went through the same ceremonies as those required of the northern chiefs of Drogheda, received the kiss of peace from the lord marshal, and bound themselves by similar indentures. The septs of Leinster, who, in their strongholds in the mountains of Wicklow, had been such troublesome neighbours to the English settlements, further entered into bonds for themselves and all their swordmen, that they would on a day to be fixed by the king surrender to him all the lands they held in Leinster, and, taking with them their moveable goods, go to some other part of Ireland; and he undertook to assure to them all the new lands they might conquer from his Irish enemies. It is understood to have been his intention to provide for the future tranquillity of the "Pale," as it now began generally to be called, by establishing English colonies in the mountains.

The number of independent chiefs who thus did homage to the king or to his marshal was no less than seventy-five, a remarkable proof of the condition to which the greater part of the island was now reduced, divided among so many rulers, each of whom, impatient of control, did his utmost to contribute to the general disorder and confusion. Proud of the success which had so far attended his expedition, the king led his new tributaries to Dublin, and there he exhibited himself before them in all his favourite pomp, for which purpose he had carried with him into Ireland the jewels of the crown. The Irish chiefs were regaled with splendid feasts, though king Richard and his gay courtiers were much scandalized by their unpolished manners. "Though they were kings," to use the words of Froissart, "yet no man could devise or speak of ruder personages."

There happened to be at this time in Ireland an English gentleman, named Henry Castile, or Cristal, who had formerly lived at court, and had afterwards served in Ireland, and it was from him that Froissart obtained much of his information relating to the transactions at the English court at Dublin. This gentleman, as he himself told the story, was engaged in a skirmish with the Irish, in which the latter were defeated, but in the pursuit his horse took fright, and, in spite of all his efforts, carried him away into the midst of the enemy. As he was thus passing through the Irish, one of them,

with extraordinary agility, leaped on the back of his horse, and, without offering him the slightest injury, held him tight by the arms, and succeeded easily in making him his prisoner. He carried him to his house, which is described as being strong, and situated in a town surrounded with wood, palisades, and stagnant water. The name of his capturer, Castile said, was Brian Costeret, who kept him with him seven years, and conceived so great a friendship for him, that he gave him his daughter in marriage, by whom he had two children. This man, being thus well acquainted with the language and manners of the Irish, and being known among them and looked upon with respect, was a useful assistant at king Richard's court, and was employed especially to teach them English politeness and good manners.

Among the numerous chiefs received at court, especial attention was shown towards four, O'Connor of Connaught, O'Neill of Ulster, O'Brien of Thomond, and Mac Murrough of Leinster; and king Richard determined to show his great regard for them by conferring upon them the honour of knighthood. When they were informed of the mark of favour intended for them, they expressed their astonishment that the king should think such a ceremony either necessary or acceptable, for they informed him that it was an honour they were accustomed to receive in Ireland in their childhood; and they then stated that every Irish king made his son, or, in case of his death, the next near kinsman, a knight at the age of seven years. They assembled, they said, in a meadow, where they ran with small light spears against a shield set upon a stake; he who broke the greatest number of spears acquired the largest share of honours. It was explained to them, with some difficulty, that the form of knighthood which the king proposed to confer upon them, was one of a more solemn character, which was aspired to by the greatest potentates of Europe; and, when at length they consented to go through the requisite ceremonies, Henry Castile was appointed to instruct them in the dress, forms, and manner of behaviour which were requisite for the occasion. His progress seems to have been slow, and he experienced no small difficulty in persuading them to relinquish the uncourtly custom of dining at the same table with their own minstrels and servants; and they expressed a decided repugnance to wearing breeches according to the English fashion. They

were equally unwilling to exchange their own plain mantles for the silk robes and fur trimmings of the English courtiers. The instructor met with so little success, that he was obliged to call in the assistance of the earl of Ormond, who also understood the Irish language, and was popular among the natives, and then at last the four chiefs consented to submit to the forms required. They kept watch in the cathedral of Dublin all the night of our lady's eve, and next day they were knighted with great ceremony, and the king gave a grand banquet at which the Irish kings attended in robes of state, and were seated with king Richard at his table.

Among the subjects of the English crown in Ireland, it is not likely that the class who had of late years given so much uneasiness, the "degenerate" English, would escape unnoticed. As, by the laws and proclamations so often published against them, these had incurred the guilt of treason, they carefully abstained from presenting themselves at the king's court; but they employed agents to enter into negotiations for a pardon and reconciliation. It was represented to the king that they had been driven from their allegiance and obliged to seek protection among his enemies by the injustice and oppression to which they had been exposed; and they reiterated all the old complaints against the violence of the government, the exactions and extortions of the king's officers, the treacherous neglect of the defence of the districts in which their possessions lay, and the obstinate denial to listen to their petitions for redress. As some of these complaints were not without foundation, and as the king, now absorbed in the gaiety and pomp of his court in Dublin, was not inclined to show much severity, he hastily granted them a truce of some months, to give time to consider of their excuses.

Well satisfied with himself and with the outward show of obedience which welcomed him on every side, the king now wrote an account of his success to the duke of York, who had been left regent in England, explaining to him with some openness his views of the state of Ireland, and of the line of policy required for its final pacification. In these views, which appear indeed to have been more or less those entertained by all the English sovereigns who had preceded him, there is more wisdom than we should expect to find from the general character of Richard II. The expressions of leniency towards

the native Irish is especially deserving of remark. "There are," says the king, "in our land of Ireland three kinds of people, namely, the wild Irish, our enemies, the rebel Irish, and the English who are in obedience; it appears to us and to our council with us here, that, considering that the said rebel Irish have been driven into rebellion by injuries and wrongs done to them on one part, and because they have been allowed no remedy on the other, and that thus, if they be not wisely treated and placed in good hope of favour, they would probably join our enemies,* we have thought it right to grant them a general pardon, and take them under our special protection."

The regent, who seems to have been not so fully convinced of the wisdom of the views entertained by his sovereign, or who perhaps saw beyond the specious exterior of temporary obedience, and regretted that an army so powerful as that which king Richard carried with him had not been employed more actively, returned an answer, in his own name and in that of the privy council, coldly reminding the king that they had formerly recommended the adoption of severe measures against the rebels, until they should be completely subdued, and compelled thus to assume a more dutiful demeanour. He however intimated his belief that the opinion expressed by the king arose from the better knowledge of the state and condition of Ireland which he had acquired during his residence there, and informed him that he and the council assented to the measures he had thought good to adopt, provided, in return for the pardons so freely granted to the rebels, he exacted certain fines and ransoms as a contribution towards defraying the expenses of his journey.

The king's residence in Dublin was nevertheless not entirely in vain. He had taken care to appoint new and trustworthy judges for the Irish courts of justice, and he had commenced a series of important reforms in

* This curious royal classification of the population of Ireland deserves to be given in the original language, as it stands in the records of the Privy Council, edited by sir Harriss Nicolas.—"Pour ce ensement q'en notre terre d'Irlande sont trois maners des gentz, c'est assavoir Irrois savages nos enemis, Irrois rebelx, et Englois obeissantz; semble à nous et à notre counseil esteanr entour nous que considerez que les ditz Irrois rebelx se sount par cas rebellez, pour griefs et tortz à eux faites d'une part et par defaute que remede ne lour ad estez fet d'autre part, et qe ensement s'ils ne fussent sagement tretez et mis en bon espoir de grace, ils se vorroient verisemblablement joindre à nos enemis," &c.

the forms of legal proceedings, to reduce them to stricter conformity with those observed in England. In the middle of these occupations, new letters arrived from the privy council in England, telling him of dangers apprehended from the Scots, and of perils which threatened the church through the preaching of heretics, and pressing him in the most urgent manner to hasten his return. Accordingly, in the summer of 1395, the king returned to England, after having, as the English council appear to have anticipated, expended a large amount of public treasure without having effected any permanent advantage. He left behind him as his lord-lieutenant young Roger de Mortimer, earl of March, whose Irish titles of earl of Ulster and lord of Trim, Clare, and Connaught, intimate sufficiently the immense estates he held in that island, whilst his English possessions were so great, that, when he accompanied his sovereign to Ireland, he carried in his retinue a hundred men-at-arms, of whom two were bannerets and eight knights, two hundred archers on horseback, and four hundred archers on foot.

King Richard had scarcely quitted the island, when the specious character of the Irish submissions was made apparent by the disorders which broke out on every side. The time soon arrived when the Irish of Leinster, according to their agreement, were to evacuate that province; but, when called upon to perform their promise, they first made delays and objections, and then refused to obey the summons to depart, and rose in open revolt. Fierce incursions were at the same time made into the borders of the English pale. The English lords repulsed most of these attacks with success. Art mac Murrough is said to have narrowly escaped being made a prisoner. Thomas de Burgh and Walter de Bermingham slew six hundred Irish, with their chieftain Mac Con; and the earl of Ormond joined the young lord-lieutenant in marching against the O'Byrnes of Wicklow, whom they drove from their lands, after having stormed the ancient manor-house or castle of the chief of this sept, within the walls of which, in commemoration of this spirited action, the lord-lieutenant created seven knights.

In other parts the Irish were victorious. The sept of O'Toole of Wicklow defeated a party of English with considerable slaughter, in 1396, and no less than six score English heads were carried to their chief, besides many prisoners, and a great quantity

of captured arms and horses. The war with the septs of Wicklow was prolonged through several years, and the country in the neighbourhood of the mountains was laid waste by the constant hostile incursions of one party or the other. In 1398, soon after the English had burnt Glendalough, they received a disastrous defeat from the O'Byrnes and the O'Tooles, who, after being driven from the lands they had previously occupied, had retired into Ossory, and there continued the war. On this occasion the English experienced a greater loss than that which generally attended these petty contests. The lord-lieutenant, Mortimer, who was at the head of the English, having been hurried forward by his own impetuous valour, and ill-sustained by his own troops, rushed alone into the midst of the enemy, where he was dragged from his horse, and, it is said, literally torn to pieces by the Irish. Some of the annalists, probably to excuse the barbarity of the natives, add the improbable statement that the English chieftain was disguised as a common Irish soldier, and that he was mistaken for a native Irishman traitorously fighting against his countrymen.

The feuds among the Irish of the north and west had been revived with an increase of ferocity after king Richard's departure. They began in North Connaught among the English De Burghs and De Exeters, and soon spread among the O'Connors and the O'Donnells. Turlough O'Donnell was involved in a double war, and having first marched into Tyrone, and given a signal defeat to the clan of Henry O'Neill, he returned with all his force into Sligo, and plundered and burnt the district of Carbury with little interruption. Henry O'Neill's defeat seems to have been partly owing to a feud between him and his own kindred; on whom, after O'Donnell's departure, he took revenge, assisted, as it would appear, by the English of that neighbourhood.

These events occurred in the year 1395. Early next year O'Connor Don and O'Connor Roe were again at war, and the former was defeated with considerable slaughter in a battle in Roscommon. Turlough O'Donnell, at the same time, marched again into Carbury, defeated the O'Connors there, and plundered the district anew; he remained in the north of Connaught, robbing and slaying during the greater part of the year, and ended by taking and burning Sligo, "both the wooden and stone buildings," and the native chronicler adds that "it was

lamentable to burn that town, for its buildings both of wood and stone were very handsome." By various exploits of this kind, the O'Donnell had made himself so formidable, that Niall O'Neill of Tyrone took the alarm, and raised an army to oppose him. Early in 1397, the armies of Tyrone and Tirconnell were again encamped in face of each other, the clan of Henry O'Neill being ranged under the banner of the former. The heart of Niall O'Neill seems to have failed him, as it did on a former occasion when he was matched with the same opponent, and he made a sudden and unexpected retreat, followed by a few parties of the enemy, who carried off some plunder. O'Donnell then marched into Fermanagh, plundered the islands of Lough Erne, and, having carried home his booty in safety, proceeded again into Carbury, and ravaged it as he had done each of the preceding years. Niall O'Neill's retreat had, perhaps, arisen partly from the infirmities of age, for he died soon after, and was succeeded by his son Niall Oge O'Neill.

Connaught this year was distinguished by equal disorders; for the war had broke out between O'Connor Don, who held the sovereignty, and O'Connor Roe, with greater fury than ever. The Mac Donoughs of Sligo, retreating perhaps before the incursions of O'Donnell of Tirconnell, collected all their people and their property, and threw themselves into the plain of Roscommon to join the standard of O'Connor Don. While they lay encamped at Cinneitigh, to the north of the town of Roscommon, O'Connor Roe collected in all haste his own forces and those of his allies, among whom were the northern De Burghs, and, making a rapid march, surrounded Mac Donough's camp before he was aware, overcame him after a long and very sanguinary contest, and captured an immense booty. This battle of Cinneitigh, fought in 1397, "on the eve of the festival of first Lady-day in harvest," was long remembered by the people of Connaught. When O'Connor Don heard of the misfortune of his allies, he marched into Leitrim, defeated the friends of O'Connor Roe there in a battle known as "the Geal-maidhín," and carried off an immense booty from O'Connor Roe's estates. The O'Connors of Leitrim and Sligo, thus exposed to the resentment of O'Connor Don, sent for assistance to Turlough O'Donnell, who returned to Sligo with a great force of the people of Tirconnell, and, having compelled

the inhabitants of Carbury and Tirerrill to fly for refuge into the mountains, they collected the plunder at Lisadill in Carbury, where they halted to divide the spoils. While there near the coast, quarrelling among themselves about the division of their booty, a large party of their enemies, who had assembled unknown to them, attacked them by surprise, gained a signal victory, and made themselves masters of all the plunder.

Niall Oge O'Neill, the new chieftain of Tyrone, now entered the field, and seemed intent on extending the territory that had been left him by his father. A reconciliation had taken place between this chieftain and the clan of Henry O'Neill; and O'Donnell, deprived of this ally, was called upon at the beginning of 1398 to defend his own territory against the forces of his powerful enemy, whose successes at this moment were so great, that the Irish annalists assure us all the English and Irish of the province of Ulster, with the exception of O'Donnell alone, had submitted to him. O'Neill marched into Tirconnell, plundered the rich monastery of Ballyshannon, and committed other havoc, without meeting with great opposition, for O'Donnell had adopted the policy of retreating before him into his strongholds. Meanwhile O'Connor Roe and the De Burghs, in pursuance of the feud of the preceding years, proceeded to plunder Tirerrill and Carbury, in revenge of the misfortune which their ally O'Donnell had sustained there the year before. They removed thence into Moylurg, to plunder the territory of the Mac Dermotts, many of whom they slew and captured. The troubles of Connaught experienced little abatement during the following year; and in 1399, the O'Neills, who seem to have made their peace with O'Donnell, threw themselves with great fury upon the possessions still held by the English in the south-east of Ulster, where, after having done no inconsiderable mischief, they were defeated by the English of Dundalk.

In the year 1398, after the death of Roger de Mortimer, the king's half-brother, Thomas Holland, duke of Surrey, was appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland, but he had only held this office a few months, when king Richard resolved on paying a second visit to the island. It is not easy to assign a sufficient cause for this sudden determination. By a course of arbitrary government in England the king had made himself odious to the whole mass of his people, but he had succeeded by one means or other of

ridding himself of all those who were able or willing to thwart him in his will, and he had made the crown far more powerful than it had been for many years before. Secure in his own fatal self-confidence, and unaware of the dangerous precipice on which he stood, he inconsiderately left his post at the moment when his presence was most necessary. The only reason he gave was the insolence of his Irish enemies, and his eagerness to take an exemplary vengeance for the slaughter of the young earl of March, who, before his death, had been duly declared the next heir to his crown. The duke of York was again left regent in England; and his son, the duke of Aumale, was instructed to follow the king with a strong reinforcement. Several of his great lords accompanied the king in this expedition, the chief of whom were the duke of Exeter, the earl of Salisbury, the son of the duke of Gloucester, and young Henry of Lancaster, son of the earl of Hereford, whom he afterwards succeeded on the throne of England as Henry V. Before the king departed, he received dark intimations of intended plots and insurrections, but their only effect was to make him summon the earl of Northumberland, on whom his suspicions chiefly fell, to join his standard without delay. This nobleman pleaded the necessity of remaining on the northern border to protect it against threatened invasions by the Scots, and refused to obey. The king contented himself with proclaiming the earl a traitor, and then proceeded on his journey.

Great preparations had on this occasion been made for the naval armament, and vessels had been ordered to assemble at Milford Haven or Bristol from all parts of the coast. The king remained at the former place ten days, waiting for a favourable wind, while the army was assembling from all quarters, and the fleet was taking in immense stores of arms and provisions. On the eleventh day the king set sail, and in less than two days he reached Waterford, where he landed on Sunday the first of June, 1399. The history of this expedition has been handed down to us in French metre, written by a French knight who attended in the king's train, and whose narrative is one of the most curious records of the history of Ireland in this age which has been preserved.* This writer describes the Irish in the outskirts of

Waterford as "a wretched and filthy people, some in rags, others girt with a rope," and who had "one a hole, the other a hut, for his dwelling." "They were forced to carry great burdens, and to go into the water up to their waists, for the speedy unloading of the barges from the sea."

The citizens of Waterford received the king with public rejoicings, and he remained there six days to collect and marshal the great army he had brought with him, and review and provide for the numerous assemblage of persons who were to form his splendid court.* The army then took the field, and marched in close order to Kilkenny, where they were in the neighbourhood of the enemy, who occupied the mountain districts between that place and the sea. The king remained with his court at Kilkenny during a whole fortnight in inactivity, waiting, as it was said, for the reinforcement under the earl of Rutland. During this time, it appears that communications had been carried on with Mac Murrough and the Irish of Leinster, in the hope that they might be prevailed upon to submit; but the turbulent chieftain, who not only called himself king of Leinster, but boldly laid claim to the crown of all Ireland, declared haughtily that he would neither submit to king Richard nor obey him in anything, but that he would fight in defence of his country till his death, although it was but five years since he had made his submission in the most obsequious manner. The king was indignant at this reply to his offers of conciliation, put his army in motion on the morning of the twenty-third of June, and marched hastily and unadvisedly against him into the wild and woody mountainous districts which had so long formed his refuge. There the Irish chief had assembled around him about three thousand hardy fighting men, who are described by the writer just mentioned, an eye-witness, as people of wild

* Among the latter were a considerable number of minstrels. The French rhymist mentions the minstrels as contributing in no small degree to the gaiety of the court while at Milford Haven,—

"Là feumes nous en joie et en depport
Dix jours entiers, attendant le vent nort
Pour nous partir;
Mainte trompette y pavoit on oir,
De jour, de nuit, menestrelz retentir."

Among the names of those who occur as receiving letters of protection for going into Ireland, are—

"William Bynglay, ministrallus.
Willielmus York, ministrallus.
Walterus de Lynne, ministrallus."

* This interesting document is printed entire in the twentieth volume of the *Archæologia*, with an English translation by the Rev. J. Webb, F.S.A.

appearance, who showed very little fear or astonishment at the presence of their English enemies.* The king drew up his army in battle array at the entrance of the woods, expecting that the Irish would have come out to attack him; but when he found that none of them made their appearance, he gave orders for clearing the woods to make room for his encampment, and, having fixed the spot on which each leader was to raise his standard, he sent out strong parties in every direction to burn and destroy the neighbouring villages and houses, and perform every kind of havoc that could weaken and embarrass the Irish. He himself, in the meantime, assembled the chief people of his court, and, in the middle of the wild woods he created near a dozen knights, among whom was young Henry of Lancaster, on whom he conferred that honour with marks of peculiar distinction.

The first news of the landing of king Richard had, indeed, raised the courage of the English of Leinster and damped that of the Irish septs, and the latter had already been attacked and defeated in several quarters, and compelled to retire to those fastnesses which were at a subsequent period, described by one well acquainted with Irish manners, as "their natural castles and fortifications." Among those who had attended the last lord-lieutenant, the earl of Surrey, into Ireland, was a foreign soldier remarkable for his courage and military skill, named Janico d'Artois, who had already distinguished himself by his activity against the Irish insurgents. He was one of those celebrated "routiers," then so well known in the wars of France, Italy, and Spain, who had commenced that revolution in military tactics which laid the foundation of the modern system of warfare. Before the king had left Waterford, this commander attacked the Irish near Kells, in Kildare, slew two hundred of them, and forced the rest to a precipitate flight.

King Richard had chosen the worst road that it was then possible to choose for his march from Waterford to Dublin; he passed through the wild countries which had so long afforded a secure shelter to the turbulent septs of the Mac Murroughs, O'Kinsellaghs, Cavanaghs, O'Byrnes, and O'Tooles, which our narrator describes as being utterly

without roads, covered with woods too dense to afford a passage to those who were not intimately acquainted with the localities; with concealed bogs of such depth that the invaders were constantly in danger of plunging in up to the middle, or of being entirely lost.* At his entrance into these wilds, the well-affected inhabitants of the country came readily to the king's assistance, and, when he first halted to wait for intelligence of Mac Murrough, two thousand five hundred of them assembled at his bidding to cut down the trees and clear the ground for his camp. Next day they continued their march through the woods, but still saw little of the enemy, who were afraid of exposing themselves to the English archers. Yet they hovered close around the invader's army, and the narrator informs us that their shouts were so loud, and so appalling, that he believes they might have been heard at a distance of a long league. They had the advantage, also, of remarkably swift horses, which are described as scouring the mountains and vallies swifter than a deer. They were thus enabled to harass the English army as it moved along without receiving much hurt themselves, as they were the more formidable in this kind of desultory warfare, from their extraordinary skill in throwing large javelins which struck with such force that they pierced through haubergeards and plates of steel. Whenever parties of the English went out incautiously to forage, the Irish waited for no signal of their leaders to assemble, but they rushed from the woods upon them and put them to death without mercy. In this manner the English army was constantly galled on its march, and it experienced considerable loss.

The first encouraging event which attended their progress, was the appearance of Mac Murrough's uncle, with his dependents, who were daunted at the formidable array of the English army, and now presented themselves before king Richard like so many criminals, barefoot, and half naked, with halters round their necks, suing on their knees for pardon and peace. The king freely granted them his grace, and received their homage; and

* "Car de chemins adonc n'y avoit nulz; [veuz
N'onques maiz hommes, tant feust de gens pour-
Hardiz ne preux,
N'y pot passer, tant sont les boiz perilleux,
Et savez-vous coment en plusers lieux
Fait si parfont, que qui n'eust bien songneux
De regarder
Où l'en marche, il y fault enfondrer
Jusques aux rains, ou tout dedens entrer."

* "Trois mil hommes, qui furent moult hardi,
Et si apers, c'onques telz gens ne vy;
D'Angloiz trop pou estoient esbahi,
Ce me sembla."

then, thinking that this act of clemency might have its influence on others, he sent a messenger to Mac Murrough, offering not only to admit him to his mercy, as he had done his uncle, if he would present himself in the same manner before him, but promising to reward him with grants of castles and lands. The wily chieftain knew the privations which the English were now on the point of experiencing, and he probably expected that they would soon be glad to give him peace on much more favourable terms. He merely returned a disdainful answer, rejecting the king's proposals, and setting him at defiance.

We have seen that the king marched first from Waterford inland to Kilkenny, and that he then moved back through the wild mountain and forest lands of Wicklow to the sea. It is not easy to assign a motive for this movement, unless we suppose, as it has been suggested, that his design was to cut off Mac Murrough from the interior, and drive him up towards Dublin, where he would be intercepted by the English forces under Janico d'Artois and other commanders. It is evident, however, that he had miscalculated the difficulties with which he would have to encounter; and the army soon began to suffer from hunger. During eleven days they found nothing but a few green oats for the horses, many of which perished, and when five or six of the soldiers could obtain a small loaf between them for their day's meal, they were happy in comparison to others; gentlemen, knights, and squires, who were sometimes obliged to pass two or three days fasting. At length they reached the coast, and there they were overjoyed at the sight of three ships from Dublin laden with provisions. "Much was the contention," says the rhyming narrator, who gives a graphic description of the scene, "to get a share of them; the men rushed into the sea as though it were straw; every one spent his few pence for himself, some in eating, others in drinking, till the whole was quickly consumed. I believe there were more than a thousand men drunk that day, seeing that the wine was of Osey and Spain, the produce of which countries was remarkable for its strength; and many a cuff and a blow passed between them."* After the army

had been thus providentially relieved from its sufferings, the king gave up his project of following Mac Murrough into his hiding places, and marched direct for Dublin.

Mac Murrough was thus disappointed in any expectations he may have entertained of drawing the English army into a situation of greater distress; and he now changed his tone, and, sending for his messenger a begging friar, demanded a safe conduct to come into his presence and treat of peace and friendship; or, if the king objected to admit him to a personal interview, he suggested that one of the English lords might be sent to confer with him, in order that they might lay aside their anger and become friends. This proposal was no sooner made public, than it spread joy through the English camp; and after consulting with his council, the king determined to accede to the latter part of the proposal of the Irish chieftain, and the earl of Gloucester, who was the commander of the rear-guard of the English army, was appointed to meet Mac Murrough at a place which had been agreed upon. He was instructed to explain fully to the chief the enormity of the wrongs he had committed against the king's subjects and of his crimes against the English government, and the retribution which was due for his many breaches of faith. The earl took with him a guard of two hundred lances and a thousand archers; and the writer of the narrative we are now following was induced, by his curiosity to learn the manners and appearance of the Irish, to ask permission to accompany him. He has given us an interesting description of the effect produced upon him by the Irish chief.

The army was still pursuing its march along the coast, and it was at some distance from the sea, between two woods, that one writer saw Mac Murrough descend from the mountains, accompanied by a large body of his Irish fighting-men. He was seated on a horse without saddle or housing, as it was the custom of the Irish to ride, but it was of such value that it was said to have cost him no less than four hundred cows; for, says he, "they have little money among them in that country, and therefore their usual traffic is only with cattle." It descended the mountain with such extraordinary rapidity, that

* "Pour en avoir y ot souvent bataille;
Dedens la mer entroient, comme en paille;
Chascun pour soy y emploia sa maille,
Ou son denier,
Les uns en boire, les autres en mangier,
Tont fu rillé sans gueres attaignier.

D'ivres y ot, je croy, plus d'un millier
Celle journée;
Veu que d'Osoie estoit la vinée,
Et d'Espagne, qui est bonne contrée.
Par eulx fu là mainte buffe donnée,
Et maint tatin."

the narrator informs us he never in all his life saw hare, deer, or other animal, run with equal swiftness; and the chief, as he approached, gave surprising proofs of his dexterity in the use of a long javelin which he carried in his hand.*

The Irish were drawn up in front of the wood, while Mac Murrough approached to a little brook, where the earl of Gloucester met him. The Irish chief is described as a large man, handsome, and marvellously active; in appearance strong, proud, and stern, and like a man of enterprising character.† The earl began by reminding him of the injuries and damages which he had so often done to the king, his master, and how he had faithlessly broken his former agreements, and especially reproached him with the death of the "courteous" earl of March, young Roger de Mortimer. The Irish chief did little more than listen, and the earl's representations and expostulations were so far from producing the intended effect, that, after a brief interview, they "took short leave," to use the words of the narrative, and separated hastily. Mac Murrough returned to his woods and fastnesses; while the earl repaired to the king, and his report of the interview was so unsatisfactory that Richard grew pale with anger, and swore in great wrath, by St. Edward, that he would never leave Ireland till he had the Irish chieftain in his power, either alive or dead.

The army was now again suffering from want of provisions, and the king therefore determined to march forwards to Dublin with all his forces, and without further delay.

* "Entre deux bois, assez loing de la mer,
Maquemore la montaigne avaler
Vy, et d'Irloiz que pas ne scay nombrer
Y ot foison.
Un cheval ot sans sele ne arcon,
Qui lui avoit consté, ce disoit-on,
Quatre cens vaches, tant estoit bel et bon.
Car pou d'argent
A ou pais, pour ce communement
Marchandent eulx à bestes seulement.
En descendant couroit si asprement,
Qu'à mon advis
Onques maiz jour de ma vie ne vis
Courre si tost lievre, cerf, ne brebis,
N'autre beste, pour certain le vous dis,
Comme il faisoit.
En sa main dextre une darde portoit,
Grant et longue, de quoy moult bien gettoit."

† "Ià se maintint Masquemore; assez bel
Grans homs esteit, à merveilles ysnel;
A veue d'ueil sembloit fort, fier, et fel,
Et homs de fait."

He found it to be "a good city, standing on the sea, and containing such great abundance of merchandise and goods, that it was reported that neither flesh, fish, bread, nor wine, nor any other articles of consumption, were any dearer for all the army of the king, although it now consisted of not less than thirty thousand men."* It was the chief trading city in Ireland. The English soldiers here forgot all their sufferings, and they are described as passing a whole fortnight, as contented "as fish in water," before they gave themselves any more trouble about Mac Murrough and his wild Irish.

Then the king began again to turn his thoughts to his Irish enemies; he divided his forces into three parts, to pursue the war by marching against Mac Murrough on different sides, promising, as a further encouragement, that he would give a reward of a hundred marks of pure gold to the man who should bring the Irish chieftain into his power. If their measures were not successful, and the rebel still escaped him, he threatened that he would remain there till the end of autumn, and that then, when the leaves were fallen and the branches were dry, he would set fire to the forest, and burn his enemies out of their cover. Little did king Richard think of the changes which were destined to come upon him before that time arrived.

On the same day that the king had proclaimed a reward for any one who should capture Mac Murrough, the earl of Almarle arrived at Dublin with the long expected reinforcements, which he brought in a hundred barges, all completely equipped for war. The earl was a particular favourite of his royal master, although it appears that he already meditated treason in his heart; and when the king affectionately, but anxiously, inquired the cause of his delay, he excused himself humbly and courteously, and excuses were allowed without further

* "A Duveline alames, qui estoit
Bonne vile, car sur le mer seoit;
De marchandise et de biens y avoit
Si grant foison,
Que pour tout l'ost du roy, disoit-on,
Onques plus chier nen fu ehar ne poisson,
Pain, blé, ne vin, ne autre garnison;
Si scay-je assez
Que trente mille estoient-ilz passez
Qui furent là et entour sejournez.
D'Illande estoit la ville souveraine
Pour marchander."

suspicion. "Thus," says the narrator, "were we in joy and delight at Dublin, where full six weeks passed away very agreeably, but without any certain tidings from England." The weather, indeed, was so tempestuous, that no vessels could effect a passage between the two islands; but when a barge did at last reach the shore, the intelligence it brought was as disastrous as it was unexpected. The king learnt, for the first time, that during his absence Henry of Bolingbroke had returned to England from his banishment; that some of the most powerful of the English nobles had already joined his banner; and that the spirit of disaffection was spreading itself among the people from one end of the kingdom to the other.

The king, we are told, when first made acquainted with this alarming intelligence, turned pale with anger, and he vented his wrath upon two unoffending sons of the nobles who were in rebellion against him, by ordering young Henry of Lancaster and the son of the duke of Gloucester to be thrown into prison in the castle of Trim. He then called together his council to consult on the course most advisable to pursue, and they recommended that he should pass over into England with all possible speed, to face the danger before it had become too great. But an evil genius interfered to thwart this good counsel. The king's favourite companion, the earl of Albemarle, went to him in private, told him that the position of affairs was far less serious than had been represented, and advised him to send a small body of men into Wales under the earl of Salisbury, there to form a point of union for his friends, while he himself remained in Ireland, till he had collected shipping at Waterford to transport to England the whole body of the army he had brought over with him. The king listened to this fatal counsel; and the writer to whom we owe the interesting narrative of these events, and who was a devoted partisan of king Richard, accompanied the earl of Salisbury to Wales, a circumstance which has deprived us of any further details of the king's proceedings during the short period of his subsequent stay in Ireland. It is unnecessary to describe the rapid revolution which was going on in England. A delay of nearly three weeks in repairing to the scene of action destroyed all Richard's chance of preserving his kingdom, and he then landed in

Wales only to become a captive in the hands of his enemies. He brought with him from Ireland his lord-lieutenant, the earl of Surrey, and his brave captain Janico d'Artois. On the thirtieth day of September, 1399, Henry of Lancaster was placed on the throne of England under the title of Henry IV.

Nearly two centuries and a half had now passed, since the first invasion of Ireland by the English, and the small advance which had been made towards reducing it to a state of peaceful subjection is certainly extraordinary. More than once the whole island seemed to be on the point of bowing to the supremacy of the English crown, and then weakness at one time and overbearing insolence at another, had thrown it back into the disorder and anarchy which had so long preyed upon its vitals. But perhaps at no period since the island was nominally annexed to the crown of England, have we found its disorders more desperate, or the English government less effective, than at the close of the fourteenth century. A very curious record is preserved among the miscellaneous documents in the British Museum, which is a kind of instruction for the foundation of a verbal report, to be given by a messenger, sent over by the lord-lieutenant to the English monarch; and which was, perhaps, the information on which king Richard formed his determination of proceeding to Ireland in 1399, (as it was probably in the earlier part of that year that it was written), gives us a very remarkable picture of the state of the island at this time.*

The man who stands first on this report, for the great trouble he gave to the Irish government, is Art mac Murrough of Leinster. This chief we are told had been at war with the English before the king's first visit, and had recommenced hostilities immediately after his departure, which had been continued with little interruption until the earl of Surrey and his council had entered into negotiations with him, when he laid claim to the restitution of the barony of Norragh, and to the payment of his pension of four-score marks a-year, with the arrears, otherwise he refused to lay down his arms. The lord-lieutenant had referred the settlement of this question to the king, to which Mac Murrough had assented, with the threat that

* The original is preserved in MS. Cotton. Titus B. xi. It is printed in the twentieth volume of the *Archæologia*.

if he had no direct answer before the following Michaelmas, he would then be at open war. "He is now," says the deputy, "gone into Munster to help the earl of Desmond to ravage the lands of the earl of Ormond, and if they are successful he will return here with all his force to carry desolation through the English pale."*

On the other hand, it is stated that O'Neill of Ulster, whose sons and other kinsmen were retained as hostages in the castle of Dublin, had collected a very powerful army, and had threatened to invade the English pale, unless his hostages were set at liberty.

In the midst of these dangers, the soldiers of the lord-lieutenant were dissatisfied and mutinous for want of pay, all the money of the treasury having been carried away into England, so that the English territory in Ireland was left almost without defence, and it was in danger of "final destruction" unless a speedy remedy were found against the evil. In these and other respects it is stated that the Irish enemies were increasing in power and insolence, because the English marchers were neither able nor willing to resist them.

With respect to the inhabitants of English blood, a great part of them, such as the Botilers, the Poers, the Geraldines, the Berminghams, the d'Altons, the Barretts, the Dillons, and others, had become rebels, and would neither be obedient to the law nor submit to justice, but they destroyed the poor lieges of the land, and took their lives from them and plundered them, though at the same time they insisted on being called

gentlemen by blood and "idleness," while they were in reality nothing but strong thieves, and they were more hostile to the English even than their Irish enemies. With these latter they were in league, and between the two the king's subjects were universally distressed and ruined. Moreover, between the rebellious English on one side, and his Irish enemies on the other, the king received no profit from the revenues of the land, because the law can have no course, and the king's officers dare not put it in execution.

It is added that by the mistaken liberality of the English monarch, the revenues of the land went almost entirely into the coffers of the great barons, while at this time the county of Dublin, and part of that of Kildare, were all that really paid anything into the king's treasury. Orgial and Drogheda had been all given away; the revenues of Meath, Ulster, Cork, Tipperary, &c., belonged to the several counts palatine; the revenues of the county of Wexford were collected by the lord de Grey; those of Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Kerry, Limerick, Connaught, and Roscommon, were paid to nobody, because the population was in a state of rebellion and insurrection.

Thus the Irish exchequer was almost without revenues to pay the ordinary expenses of the government; and yet pensions and annuities of all kinds had been granted with reckless extravagance both to the Irish and others, the inability of the exchequer to pay which had been the cause of new wars and insurrections. So far from being able to satisfy or appease them, the Irish government is represented in this document as scarcely able to pay the salaries of its own officers.

* "Ét il est ore alez à Dessemond pur eider le conte de Dessemond à destruire le conte d'Ormond, s'ils puront, et après retourner avec toute la poair q'il poet avoir de les parties de Mounister pur destruire le pais."

CHAPTER XIII.

CONDITION OF IRELAND DURING THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.



IN the thirteen years during which the first king of the house of Lancaster occupied the English throne, scarcely any perceptible change took place in the condition of Ireland. The new reign seemed, however, to open with prospects of tranquillity, and the Irish septs, satisfied with their pensions, remained quiet within their own boundaries, or only quarrelled with one another. The Irish annals of Clonmacnoise state, that in consequence of the expedition of king Richard in 1399, Mac Murrough of Leinster was "mightily weakened and brought low;" and we learn from the same authority, that, probably after Richard's departure, making a sudden inroad upon the English province, he was overtaken by the English of Leinster and Meath, and was defeated, with the loss of a great number of his men. This check, perhaps, contributed in some measure to reduce him for a year or two to the condition of a quiet pensioner of the English government. Roscommon continued to be the scene of turbulence, arising from the continual feuds between the O'Connors, Mac Dermotts, O'Kellys, and De Burghs; and in 1400, the castle of Dunamon, on the river Suck, was captured from the De Burghs by the O'Connors, and a De Burgh, who kept it, was slain. It is recorded that, in the assault of this fortress, an Irish chief, named William Garv, accidentally slew Gregory O'Maolconry, one of the renowned historians of the Siol-Murray, with his javelin, which he threw at random, and that he was compelled to pay a hundred and twenty-six cows as the *eraic* or fine for his death.

The chiefs of Tircconnell and Tyrone were again exhausting themselves in mutual hostilities, and the successes of the former so far crippled the power of the O'Neills at the beginning of the new reign, that the English had little to fear on the side of Ulster. A partial and precarious reconciliation took place next year, but the Kinel-Owen were divided among themselves, and in 1402 the

whole of Tyrone was desolated by their mutual animosity. The Scots, who were at war with England, tried to take advantage of these troubles in the north of Ireland by sending frequent expeditions to the coast, and they were readily assisted by the Irish in their depredations on the English settlements. The government at Dublin was obliged to employ its utmost activity in protecting the coast against these attacks, and, on one occasion, a naval force under the command of the constable of Dublin castle, was defeated off Strangford with considerable loss, in an encounter with the Scottish ships.

Ireland had changed its deputed rulers rather frequently at the commencement of the new reign. On the 10th of December, 1399, sir John Stanley, who had thrice held the office under the preceding monarch, was appointed lord-lieutenant for three years; but in 1400, the office of lord-deputy was given to Alexander Balscott, bishop of Meath, and he was succeeded, during the year 1401, first by sir William Stanley (brother of sir John Stanley), next by sir Stephen Scroope, and finally, on the 13th of November, by the king's son, Thomas duke of Lancaster, who was appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland for the term of twenty-one years. The necessities of Ireland had at this time been considered so great, that, during the administration of sir John Stanley, the English parliament granted a subsidy for three years to provide for the exigencies of the government at Dublin. Sir Stephen Scroope, who arrived in Dublin on the eve of St. Bartholomew, held the office only as the deputy of the duke of Lancaster; according to the writer of the chronicles of Ireland in Holinshed, this man "was sore cried out upon by the voices of the poor people," during his tenure of office in the preceding reign, "inasmuch," says this historian, "that the lady his wife, hearing of such exclamations, would in no wise continue with him there, except he would receive a solemn oath on the bible, that wittingly he should wrong no christian creature in that land, but duly and truly he should see payment made for all expenses;

and hereof, she said, she had made a vow to Christ so determinately, that unless it were on his part firmly promised, she could not on peril of soul go with him. Her husband assented, and accomplished her request effectually, recovered a good opinion for his upright dealing, reformed his caters and purveyors, enriched the country, maintained a plentiful house; remission of great offences, remedies for persons endangered to the prince, pardons of lands and lives, he granted so charitably and so discreetly, that his name was never repeated among them without many blessings and prayers, and so cheerfully, they were ready to serve him against the Irish upon all necessary occasions."

On Sunday the 13th of November, 1401, the duke of Lancaster landed at a place called Blowk, near Dalkey, and he proceeded the same day to Dublin. The new lord deputy was not quite of age, and he was accompanied by his two guardians, sir Thomas Erpingham and sir Hugh Waterson. The summer following his arrival, the improved spirit of the English was shown in a signal victory gained by the citizens of Dublin under their mayor John Drake, over the O'Byrnes of Wicklow, who had taken the field with an army of no less than four thousand men; the men of Dublin attacked them boldly in the neighbourhood of Bray, on the 11th of July, and put them to flight, after having slain about five hundred of their best fighting-men. At the moment they were thus engaged, their brethren in Dublin were occupied in the solemnity of consecration of the new church of the friars-preachers. In consideration of the services thus rendered by the citizens of Dublin on various occasions, the king granted to the city the right of the sword, or the privilege of having a gilt sword carried before the mayor, with other immunities.

A scene of a different character was exhibited in the city a few weeks later. The lord-lieutenant having called a parliament to meet in Dublin in the month of September, the sheriff of Louth, John Dowdal, while in attendance upon it, was publicly attacked and murdered by sir Bartholomew Verdon and two or three other English gentlemen. The perpetrators of this savage outrage were immediately proceeded against, and, as they did not make their appearance to answer the charge, they were outlawed, and their estates disposed of by custodians; but shortly afterwards they obtained a pardon from the king, and their estates were restored

to them. This was not the only act of turbulence among the English subjects in Ireland which occurred during the presence of the princely ruler, for we learn from the Irish chronicles that about this time a great war broke out in Munster between the earls of Desmond and Ormond, the latter of whom bore among the natives the character of being "the chief warrior of the English in Ireland."

In other parts demonstrations were made of a more pacific description. Three Irish chiefs of some consequence, Achy mac Mahon, O'Byrne of the mountains, and Ryley, the head of a great northern sept, repaired in person to the lord-lieutenant, and entered into covenants of allegiance and service. They were, perhaps, willing to obtain protection against the O'Neills and the O'Donnells, and they promised in return to serve faithfully against the Irish enemies of the king of England. O'Byrne, who was apparently dissatisfied with his old Irish allies of the south, gave up to the king, as a proof of his sincerity, the castle of Mackenigan and its appurtenances. Various marks of favour were shown to the chiefs, in return for their voluntary submissions. The land and domains of Feruewy in Louth, with the exception of the castle, was granted for life to Achy mac Mahon. Towards the end of the year 1403, the duke of Lancaster returned to England, leaving sir Stephen Scroope as his deputy; and when he also was recalled, in the beginning of the following Lent, the lords of the land chose the earl of Ormond to be their lord justice.

One of the first acts of the new governor was to call a parliament at Dublin, which confirmed the statute of Kilkenny and some other laws conceded in the same spirit. In 1405, the comparative tranquillity of the preceding years gave place to repetitions of the older tumults and disorders, and the hostilities in which the English monarch was engaged, against Scots and Welsh, reached the Irish shores. The piracies and other outrages committed by the Scottish cruisers led to acts of fierce retaliation. In the spring of the year just mentioned, several Scottish vessels were captured, and brought into the harbour of Dublin; and the merchants of this city, as well as those of Drogheda, fitted out ships to different parts of the coast of Scotland, where they did considerable damage, and brought away much plunder. Similar attacks were made on the coast of Wales, and they carried away among their spoils the shrine of

the Welsh saint, St. Cubin, which was placed as an offering in the church of the Holy Trinity (Christ church). This piratical warfare was ended in the following year by a treaty of peace, negotiated with Macdonald lord of the isles, by the bishop of Derry and Janico d'Artois, who was now again engaged in active service in Ireland.

The Irish at the same time broke out into open insurrection in various parts. New wars arose between the O'Connors and the Mac Dermotts, which proved fatal to the chief of the latter sept. Several Englishmen of some account were slain by the O'Moores and other clans. And, to crown all, Mac Murrough, who had so long kept aloof in sullen tranquillity, again took up arms, and ravaged the plains of Wexford, Carlow, and Kildare, and in the course of his depredations Carlow and Castledermott were committed to the flames. The Irish annalists have recorded that in the midst of these new disorders, Richard mac Rannall, the "intended lord" of Muintir Eoluis, died of an excess in drinking whiskey.* The lord deputy Scroope, taking with him the earls of Ormond and Desmond, the prior of Kilmainham, and other gentlemen of Meath, marched against Mac Murrough, and, after some partial successes gained by the bravery of the Irish chieftain, he at length defeated him with great loss, and reduced him to obedience.

While the lord deputy was thus occupied in Leinster, the rivalry of the O'Connors again set the whole of Connaught in a flame. It appears that the two competitors, O'Connor Don and O'Connor Roe, had agreed to share between them the chieftainship of Connaught. Early in 1406, O'Connor Don, or, as he was properly named, Turlough Oge O'Connor, went to a house of the De Burghs at Oregganus in Galway, and there, taking the occasion of a sudden dispute, he was set upon and slain by Cathal, the son of O'Connor Roe, and by John De Burgh. The latter was himself slain by the unhappy victim in the struggle. The De Burghs of Connaught were in general partisans of O'Connor Roe. O'Connor of Offaly, with his son Calvach, and the sons of O'Connor Roe, one of whom was the slaughterer of

O'Connor Don, marched to attack and plunder their enemies on the English borders, and at the same time some of the rival O'Connors, joined with the English of Meath, had proceeded on a similar errand against the lands of the partisans of O'Connor Roe. The account of their meeting, as told by the annalists, is somewhat picturesque. The English and their party were busy plundering the town or village of one of the Irish chiefs of the other party, when a few of the latter under the command of Calvach O'Connor and Cathal the son of O'Connor Roe, came up and found them thus employed. It happened that the chief to whom this town belonged had borrowed of Calvach O'Connor a large cauldron for brewing ale, and the first object which met their sight as they approached was one of the kerns belonging to the invading party carrying the cauldron on his back. The man who had borrowed it, and who had been driven from his house, now joined Calvach and Cathal, and seeing what was going on, said to the former, "There is your cauldron, on the kern's back; I return it to you, if you will take it." The leader replied, "I accept it where it is;" and taking a large stone, he threw it with such precision, that it struck the cauldron with amazing force, and the sudden alarm caused by the extraordinary noise it emitted, threw the plunderers into such confusion that they were easily defeated, and no less than three hundred, English and Irish, are said to have been slain. The most holy relic in Connaught, the mitre of St. Patrick, was captured from the English on this occasion. After the death of O'Connor Don, Cathal, the son of Roderic O'Connor, one of the family of the late king, was appointed his successor, and immediately took the field, assisted by the De Burghs of Clanrickard. In a battle fought in the county of Mayo, against O'Connor Roe and the O'Kellys and Mac Dermotts, the new king Cathal was slain, with several of the De Burghs, and a great many of the fighting men on both sides. The De Burghs seem now to have turned against O'Connor Roe; but it was long before the affairs of Connaught were brought to anything like an amicable settlement.

As these troubles among the Irish increased, they were felt more and more in the English territories, especially in Meath and Ulster, where the continual hostilities of the two races had degenerated into a settled personal hatred, which led to all kinds of acts of

* This appears to be the earliest notice of the *uisge-beatha*, usquebaugh, or whiskey, or, as it is translated by the English writers, *aqua vitæ*, that has been met with. One of the old English writers who recorded the event mentioned in the text, states rather quaintly that it was not *aqua vitæ* but *aqua mortis*, to Richard mac Rannall.

treachery and revenge. In 1407, an Irish chief of the north, named Mac Adam mac Gilmore, whom the English chroniclers term "a certain false and heathenish wretch," because it appears that he had caused forty churches to be destroyed, took prisoner one of the warlike family of the Savages; the heavy ransom of two thousand marks was demanded and paid, and no sooner had the Irishman received the money, than he broke his part of the agreement, and slew both the knight and his brother, who had been captured at the same time. Towards the summer of this year the lord deputy was called into the field to suppress a very serious insurrection in the county of Kilkenny, where the Irish were laying waste the country in every direction; he took with him as usual the earls of Ormond and Desmond, and the prior of Kilmainham, Thomas le Botiler, an illegitimate brother of the earl of Ormond, who joined with the profession of an ecclesiastic all the warlike character which distinguished his family. When they came upon the enemy, they found them plundering the town of Callan, and they fell upon them with such fury, that no less than eight hundred of the Irish, with their leader, Teige O'Carroll, lord of Ely, were slain on the spot. This signal defeat not only struck terror into the natives who dwelt within the English pale, but discouraged the insurgents in other parts; and such was the superstition of the Irish, and, as it would appear, the novelty of an ecclesiastic appearing in arms, that they believed that, out of respect for the prior of Kilmainham, the sun stood still that day while the English marched six miles, to favour their attack.

The earl of Ormond, on his return to Dublin, was elected lord justice, and he held a parliament at Dublin, which again confirmed the statute of Kilkenny. Under this governor the citizens of Dublin were again called out to defend their territory against the Irish septs, and they slew many of them, and, after gaining an important victory, returned to Dublin laden with the heads of the slain. Shortly afterwards, another warlike ecclesiastic, the prior of Conall, with a handful of men, defeated a large body of Irish in the plain of Kildare, and killed many of them.

In 1408, Thomas duke of Lancaster was again sent over to undertake the government of Ireland in person, and he seems to have been anxious to effect useful reforms and changes in the administration of that country.

Among the conditions on which he undertook the high office of lord-lieutenant on the present occasion, one was, that he should be allowed to transport into Ireland, at the king's charge, one or two families from every parish in England; and he required that the demesnes of the crown should be resumed, and that the act against absentees should be enforced more strictly. That his administration began with vigour, is evident from all we know of his acts. He appears to have entertained the old prejudice against the great Anglo-Irish barons, or, probably, they had provoked him by their insolent opposition to his plans; for he caused the earl of Kildare, and three of his family, to be arrested, and kept the earl a prisoner in Dublin castle until he had paid a fine of three hundred marks. The year during which the prince remained in Ireland was spent in constant military operations. He marched in person, at the head of his army, against a new insurrection in Leinster, where Mac Murrough was again in arms; and the Irish chroniclers speak of encounters between the English and the natives in various other parts of the island. The rigour of his government appears to have provoked opposition on more occasions than one, and in a great fray at Kilmainham, the particulars of which are not recorded, the prince was wounded, and narrowly escaped with his life. That this fray was connected with dangers of a still more serious description, seems evident from the circumstance that the duke immediately afterwards ordered proclamation to be made, that all who were bound by their tenures to serve the king, should assemble without delay at Ross. After having summoned a parliament to meet at Kilkenny, for the purpose of demanding a tallage, the result of which is not known, he set sail for England on the thirteenth of March, 1409, leaving the warlike prior of Kilmainham as his deputy.

The compiler of the Irish chronicle printed with Hollinshed, which we have had reason to quote more than once, has preserved a letter of complaint from the inhabitants of Cork, Kinsale, and Youghall, to the lord-deputy, which appears to be of this date, and furnishes a curious picture of what the English settlers considered to be the great grievances of Ireland at that time. It states that in the county of Cork, besides "knights, esquires, gentlemen, and yeomen, to a great number, that might dispend yearly eight hundred pounds, six hundred pounds, four

hundred pounds, two hundred pounds, one hundred pounds, an hundred marks, twenty marks, twenty pounds, ten pounds, some more, some less," there were the following lords, whose yearly revenues, "besides havens and creeks," were respectively, the marquis Caro, two thousand two hundred pounds sterling; the lord Barnevale of Bearhaven, one thousand six hundred; the lord Wagan of Green castle, thirteen thousand; the lord Balram of Enfort, one thousand three hundred; the lord Conrey of Kelbretton, one thousand two hundred; the lord Mandevile of Barenstellie, one thousand two hundred; the lord Arundel of the Strand, one thousand five hundred; the lord Barod of the guard, one thousand one hundred; the lord Steiney of Baltimore, eight hundred; the lord Roche of Poole castle, ten thousand; and the lord Barry, one thousand eight hundred pounds sterling, the latter being by forfeiture at that time in the king's hands. The petitioners pray that the deputy would proceed to Cork, that he would there call all these lords before him, as well as others of the Irish chiefs in that county, and that he would bind them in pain of loss of life, lands, and goods, that they should none of them make war upon one another, without his licence or commandment; for their squabbles, it is added, were the cause of the destruction of those parts. The petitioners then proceed to state how once all the Irishmen and the king's enemies were driven into a great valley between two great mountains, where they lived many years "with their white meat," till at length the English lords fell at variance among themselves, and then the party which was weakest called in the Irish to help them to vanquish their enemies, so the Irish took advantage of their feuds, became stronger than the English, and gradually drove them away or reduced them under their subjection. They complain that thus, and by the backwardness of the lords in paying any contribution towards the defence of the land, they are left exposed on all sides, and they request the lord deputy to send two justices to "see this matter ordered," and some English captains under whom the petitioners might rise up in arms and redress their "enormities" at their own costs.

It is hardly necessary to say much more of the transactions of the remaining years of this short reign, than that the whole island seemed to be sinking deeper and deeper into barbarism and confusion amid the domestic

quarrels of the native septs, and their wars with one another and with the English. It is a mere continuous story of chiefs deposed, imprisoned, and slaughtered, of towns and villages rifled and burnt, and of outrages of every description. In 1410, after the prior of Kilmainham had held a parliament at Dublin, in which a new act was passed making it treason to exact coyne and livery, he invaded the country of the turbulent O'Byrnes with an army of fifteen hundred Irish kerns, who served the English for pay, eight hundred of whom immediately deserted to the enemy, so that "if the power of Dublin had not been there, it had gone evil with the lord deputy." An invasion of Meath by O'Connor, who carried away a number of English knights and gentlemen prisoners, is one of the last acts of importance recorded by the English chroniclers as having occurred under the reign of Henry IV., who died on the 20th of March, 1413.

It was Meath, indeed, that was most frequently exposed to these scenes of confusion and bloodshed, and there the English authorities had been latterly reduced to the necessity of buying off the hostility of the border chiefs, by the regular payment of annual pensions, a practice which, as it implied little love or trust on either side, had the natural effect of increasing the evil it was intended to ward off. All that we know of the history of Ireland shows us that the Irish, divided and disunited as they were, were increasing in power, and that the extent of English rule was becoming constantly more restricted; while it is also clear that, in spite of the numerous penal enactments against it, the old English settlers of the open country were constantly intermingling with the natives, and that the practice of intermarriage and gossipred were becoming every day more frequent. Still, by what little we see of the acts of the Irish parliament, we find that it persevered in the old system of penal statutes against the natives, and that it was constantly actuated by the same spirit of persecution and proscription. This arose perhaps in some degree from the circumstance that the men who attended them in their places most regularly were the representatives of the towns, or those who actually showed the strength of their anti-Irish feelings by not keeping away. An act of the Irish parliament which met in 1411, actually ordained that no Irish enemy (as the natives who did not acknowledge obedience to the English government were called), should be

permitted to depart from the realm, without special leave under the great seal of Ireland; and that any subject who should seize the person and goods of a native attempting to leave the island without such licence, was to receive one half of his goods, while the other half was to be forfeited to the crown.

The small portion of the island which still remained in the quiet possession of the English, seems to have been as remarkable for its bad government as the other parts were for their turbulence. A petition from the commons of Ireland to the English privy council during this reign, charges the law officers of the crown with gross abuses and acts of oppression, the result of which, the petitioners state to have been, that the people were harassed and impoverished, the cultivation of the soil neglected, and many good towns and hamlets utterly ruined. They state that, in defiance of Magna Charta, many churchmen, lords, gentlemen, and others of the king's subjects, were thrown into prison without legal process, and their lands seized and treated as forfeited. It is stated, among other examples in support of these charges, that the lord-lieutenant received, in this illegal manner, eighty marks of the goods of the archbishop of Armagh,

besides taking to the value of forty pounds of the goods of the archdeacon of Kildare. He is also charged with having, without cause, placed under arrest sir Nicholas Algar, and kept him in prison until he had extorted from him a missal worth ten marks, and forty marks in money. Other equally discreditable acts of the chief governor are rehearsed. It is stated in this petition, as a grievous complaint on the part of the commons of the county of Louth, that the king's commissioners had, contrary to law, issued an order to assess Achy mac Mahon, and other Irish chiefs who had been pensioned by the government on that county, to the great oppression and impoverishment of the English inhabitants; and they state that these Irish refused to accept such food as the English used, and were dispersed with their families through the country, spying day and night the woods and fortresses, to the evident danger of the English rule. It appears that the lord-lieutenant Ormond, sensible of the great disorders which prevailed in every department, was anxious to persuade the king to visit Ireland in person, that he might be better able by his presence to reduce the offenders to order.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REIGN OF HENRY; SIR JOHN TALBOT APPOINTED LORD-LIEUTENANT; NEW PETITIONS OF GRIEVANCES.



AFTER the accession of king Henry V. to the English throne, sir John Stanley was appointed to succeed the prior of Kilmainham in the government of Ireland, and he repaired to Dublin to exercise the office of lord-lieutenant; but on the eighteenth of January following he died at Athird, and the Irish council elected Thomas Cranley or Crauley, archbishop of Dublin, to exercise the office of lord deputy. The Irish chroniclers describe Stanley as "a man who gave neither toleration nor sanctuary to ecclesiastics, laymen, or literary men, but all with whom he came in contact he subjected to cold, hardship, and famine." It appears that the English ruler had provoked

the bardic class among the Irish by his contempt for literary men, and more especially for an act of violence against the poetical family of the O'Higgins, who had provoked his resentment by some act of insubordination. The conclusion of the history, as told by the Irish writers, furnishes a curious proof of the superstitious reverence with which the bardic class were still regarded by the Irish in general. "The O'Higgins then satirized John Stanley, who only lived five weeks after the satirizing, having died from the venom of their satires; this was the second instance of the poetic influence of Niall O'Higgin's satires, the first having been the clan Conway turning grey the night they plundered Niall at Cladain, and the second the death of John Stanley."

The new reign seemed to open with a revival of the old military spirit of the English settlers, which was encouraged by the arrival of reinforcements from England. The Irish chroniclers have left on record, at the time of Stanley's appointment, the return to Ireland of the earl of Ormond, as well as of the earl of Desmond, the latter bringing with him "many Saxons" to spoil Munster. The Irish seemed more than usually bent upon invading the English territory, just as the English were resuming their courage for resistance, and a succession of severe conflicts followed, in which sometimes one party and sometimes the other had the mastery. In one of these, at a place called Inor, Janico d'Artois, who was actively engaged in these hostilities, was repulsed with some loss, to the no small triumph of the Irish, who had already learnt to regard this commander with terror. The insurrection now took so formidable a character, that the archbishop found it necessary to place himself at the head of the army; but he proceeded no further than Castle Dermod, where he remained with his clergy to pray for the good success of his men, who, meanwhile, marched to Kilkea, and there encountering the enemy, they defeated them with great slaughter. The English, however, were not always so successful in their encounters during the administration of the good archbishop, for in a battle in Meath, on the tenth of May, 1414, the English were defeated with great slaughter by the O'Connors; Thomas baron of Skrine was slain in the battle, and a number of men of distinction were made prisoners by the Irish. In spite of these tumults, and of the danger with which the English pale was threatened, the intractable Irish parliament called by the archbishop, probably actuated by their discontent against the absentees, and preferring to be defended with money from England than with that which was to be taken from their own pockets, refused supplies for carrying on the war, and it was dissolved, after a session of fifteen days.

The king now determined to send a governor capable of carrying on the war against the Irish with vigour, and he selected for the office sir John Talbot of Hallamshire, who then, by right of his wife, took the title of lord of Furnival, but who afterwards distinguished himself so remarkably in the French wars of Henry VI., and was rewarded with the title of earl of Shrewsbury. The arrival of this great cap-

tain seems to have put the Irish parliament in a better temper, and, being assembled at Trim, it granted supplies for the government without further difficulty. The Irish chroniclers speak of Talbot with expressions of terror that mark the activity of his movements. He landed at Dalkey in the November of 1414, and received intelligence of some disastrous incursions of the Irish into the English pale, which caused him to lose no time in collecting together the troops at the disposition of the government, and in marching against its enemies; and his success was so great, that when he was on the point of returning to England, the Irish of the pale sent a pressing petition to the king, that he might be allowed to remain for their further safeguard. This petition is still preserved, signed by a great number of persons of note, ecclesiastics and laymen, headed by the bishop of Kildare, and it gives an interesting description of Talbot's military course round the borders of the English pale.* The petitioners describe themselves as living in a "land of war," surrounded by Irish enemies and English rebels, and acquaint the king that the temporary absence of their warlike lord-lieutenant, had already given courage to these enemies to renew the attacks which he had forced them to discontinue.

As soon as Talbot had assembled his army, and consulted with his council, he proceeded against O'Moore of Leyx, "one of the strongest Irish enemies of Leinster," against whom he made "many great journeys and hostings," remaining twice in his country six days and six nights, burning and destroying all his country, corn, and goods, and taking "his chief place." He took by storm and destroyed two castles belonging to O'Moore, named the castle of Colyndragh and the castle of Shemeigh, and set at liberty a number of English prisoners. The chieftain who had been so long formidable to the English pale, now broken and humbled, was obliged to sue for peace, entering into written indentures of service, and giving his son as a hostage for their performance. Nor was O'Moore thus released, but he was made to march with his troops, along with those of the lord-lieutenant, a distance of forty leagues, to assist in reducing the Mac Mahons of Ulster.

The expedition against the enemies of

* It has been printed from the original in the British Museum in the second series of sir Henry Ellis's "Original Letters Illustrative of Irish History."

Ulster was equally successful with that against Leyx, and the Mac Mahons, after great slaughtering, burning, and plundering, were reduced to the same terms, and obliged to march with the lord-lieutenant against the O'Connors. Each conquered sept was thus made to increase the English army with its forces, every Irish enemy being compelled to serve upon the other, to use the words of the paditri, in such wise as had not been seen before for a long time. After the reduction of the O'Connors and the O'Hanlons, the O'Neills, the O'Donnells, the Mac Guires, and others of the great chiefs, sent in their submissions and sued for peace, under the terror which had been impressed upon them by the fate of the others.

Having thus broken the power of the Irish septs, Talbot proceeded to repair the defences of the English frontiers. He repaired the bridge of Athy, "set in the frontier of the border of the Irish enemies of Leyx, for the safe keeping whereof he hath erected a new tower upon the same for a ward, to put thierewith a great fortification about the same for resistance of the said enemies, to the great comfort and relief of the English, and great overthrow of the Irish enemies; by which bridge your faithful lieges were often preyed and killed, but now your said lieges, both there and elsewhere, may suffer their goods and chattels to remain in the fields day and night, without being stolen, or sustaining any other loss, which hath not been seen here by the space of these thirty years past." The petitioners add that, "after this, upon the Monday in Whitsun week, at Lasenhall, in the county of Dublin, Maurice O'Keating, chieftain of his nation, traitor and rebel to you our gracious lord, for the great fear which he had of your said lieutenant, for himself and his nation, yielded himself to your lieutenant without any condition, with his breast against his sword's point and a cord about his neck, there delivering to your said lieutenant without ransom the English prisoners whom he had taken beforetime, and grace was granted to him by indenture, and his eldest son given in pledge to be loyal lieges from thenceforward to you our sovereign lord."

Sir John Talbot's attack was not directed merely against the Irish enemies, for the turbulent English of the old race were also made to experience the strength of his arm. Munster especially had been long desolated by the insolence of the Geraldines, and the earl of Desmond was at this moment a pri-

soner in the castle of one of his uncles. The lord-lieutenant, with great "labour and cost," reduced the Geraldines to sullen obedience, and forced them to set the captive at liberty.

About three months had been sufficient to perform all these brilliant achievements, yet they left but little substantial effect behind them, and the force which had reduced the Irish to submission was no sooner removed, than they re-appeared in the field and committed greater depredations than ever. The anxiety they gave to the government in England is seen in the frequent resolutions relating to the state of Ireland found in the minutes of the privy council. In Ireland the English population began again to complain loudly of their grievances, and of the abuses committed by the officers of the crown; and on one occasion, a petition was drawn up by the Irish parliament, setting forth fully the wants and sufferings of the king's subjects in Ireland, which was to be sent over to the king by the hands of Thomas Crauley archbishop of Dublin, when the intention of the petitioners was frustrated by the chancellor Laurence Merbury, who was probably interested personally in preventing an inquiry into official abuses, and who, with a bold stretch of power, refused to affix the great seal to the petition, and thus set aside the remonstrance of the Irish legislature.

The succeeding years, undistinguished by any events of peculiar interest, offer the same succession of strife and depredations, of mutual prejudices and mutual persecutions, of complaints, of grievances and abuses without any apparent redress, until the year 1418, when Talbot was again involved in serious hostilities in Leinster, in the course of which the brave chieftain of the Cavenaghs, Art mac Murrough, was at length captured, and his detention appears to have been considered a matter of so much importance, that he was sent over to England to be confined in the Tower of London. Near the same time, sir William de Burgh defeated the sept of the O'Kellys in a sanguinary engagement, in which five hundred of the Irish were slain, and their captain was taken prisoner. Soon after this the lord-lieutenant was called over to England, and he left his brother, Richard Talbot archbishop of Dublin, to act as his deputy. Talbot had contracted debts both public and private, partly owing to the limited income which was placed at his disposal, and these,

like several of his predecessors he left unpaid. An act of parliament was subsequently passed for paying them out of the public treasury. The year in which he was recalled from his office, a large body of Irish soldiers were sent under the prior of Kilmainham to serve the king in his French wars, and did there such good service that they are spoken of with admiration by the historians of the time.

In the April of 1419, James earl of Ormond was appointed lord-lieutenant, with very extensive powers, and he seemed to have taken a lesson from his predecessor in the art of Irish warfare; the old writers speak with wonder of the numerous septs of Irish enemies and "degenerate" English who were successively "tamed" by his arms. The earl of Ormond called several parliaments, which showed greater docility in granting supplies than had been usual under former governors. In the last of these, held at Dublin in 1421, not long before the death of king Henry V., Richard O'Hedian, archbishop of Cashel, was brought to trial on no less than thirty articles of accusation alledged against him by John Gese, bishop of Lismore and Waterford. These charges were evidently dictated by party spirit and personal malevolence, and some of them are of a ridiculous character, but they were supported by the prejudices and passions of the day, and were prosecuted with great animosity. Among the principal crimes objected to the archbishop, it was asserted that he loved none of the English nation, but was very partial to the Irish; that he gave all his benefices to Irish clerks, and had recommended other bishops to follow his example; that he had counterfeited the great seal, and forged the king's letters patent; that he had harboured the design of making himself king of Munster; and that he had taken a ring from the image of St. Patrick, a pious offering of the earl of Desmond, and given it to his own concubine.

It had become almost a custom with the Irish parliament to transmit to the king a petition praying for the reformation of the state of the land, at least once every two or three years. The parliament just mentioned compiled such a petition, consisting of nineteen different articles, which was sent through the hands of the archbishop of Armagh and sir Christopher Preston; and, as preserved on the close roll of the year, it furnishes us with a curious picture of the real state of the English pale, and of the

different grievances and wants of the inhabitants.

We have already seen enough to be convinced that, in this troubled province, justice seldom ran its even course, and the foremost complaint in this petition is directed against the various extortions, oppressions, non-payments, and levies of coyne and livery, practised by the lieutenants and their deputies, and the neglect in the executions of the laws, grievances which they believed would only be effectually remedied when the king should visit his realm of Ireland in person. In the second place they complained that all the supplies and revenues granted for carrying on the war and for defending the land had hitherto been applied by the deputies to their own private uses, to the great injury of the interests of the crown. In the third article, they required that there should be a permanent coinage of money in Dublin, in the same manner as in England, and that a mint should be established there with all necessary officers. They refer in the fourth article to the submissions made by certain of the Irish enemies, and to the recognizances entered into by them, subjecting themselves to heavy fines, payable in the apostolic chamber, in case of breaking their oaths of allegiance; and they pray the king to certify such breaches of faith to the pope, and to request him to put the bonds in force against the offenders. The fifth article is a complaint against the lord chancellor Merbury, who had on the former occasion refused to fix the great seal to the petition of the parliament, and they pray that he may be immediately called to account for his conduct. They complain, in the sixth place, that in consequence of the wars and intolerable burdens to which they were subjected, the great landholders, artificers, and workmen, were continually emigrating to England.

In the next five articles of the petition, they express their sentiments of the different rulers who had governed Ireland during the present reign. Their complaint against sir John Stanley was, that, when holding the office of lord deputy, he did not pay his debts, although he died enriched by numerous acts of extortion and oppression; and they pray that his heirs and executors may be compelled to come into Ireland to discharge his obligations. They praised the worthy conduct of his successor, Thomas Crauley archbishop of Dublin, who always administered the duties of his office with justice and benignity. Sir John Talbot is

accused of having been guilty of numerous acts of extortion and cruelty during the time he held the office, and they pray that he also should be sent back to Ireland to discharge his debts and make amends for his injustice. They pray that commissioners should be sent over, as in preceding reigns, to inquire into the conduct and measures of the lord deputy and great officers of the crown. They extoll the example of their present lord-lieutenant, the earl of Ormond, who, on entering upon the duties of his office, had made a declaration in parliament that he would observe the laws, pay his just debts, and that he would further, at the close of his administration, assign over lands without any reserve until all such debts should be discharged. He, they said, had been the instrument of abolishing entirely the odious extortion of coyne and livery. And they added, that he was only hindered from effecting further good by want of the necessary means, with which they prayed the king to supply him.

They next repeated an old complaint against the improper selection of persons to fill offices in the Irish exchequer, who often performed their duties only by deputies, yet practised all kinds of unfair means to extort fees and increase their incomes. In many instances too (a complaint which likewise had been frequently made before), two or three places were monopolized by one individual. The next complaints related to grievances arising out of recent enactments. They complained that English law students, born in Ireland and going over to England to pursue their studies there, were, by a late regulation, excluded from the inns of court, contrary to the practice of all former periods since the conquest of Ireland. And they complained further that, although the statute of 3 Ric. II. concerning absentee proprietors contained an exception in favour of studious persons, it yet daily happened that Irish students attending in the English schools and universities experienced a variety of obstructions and annoyances under colour of that

act. The remaining articles of this memorial are of less importance, and need not be particularized.

This last year of the reign of the fifth Henry saw a renewal of the great insurrections which had so often desolated the island, and which now gave full employment to the lord justice Ormond. The most serious of these risings took place among the O'Moores of Leix; and there the earl of Ormond marched first, and encountering their chieftain, vanquished O'Moore and his "terrible army" in the Red Bog of Athy. During the four following days he continued to waste and burn the lands of the rebels, until they presented themselves before him and humbly sued for peace. O'Dempsey, who had before solemnly taken the oath of allegiance in the time of sir John Talbot, next broke his faith, and invaded the English pale, where he made himself master of the castle of Ley, which the lord justice had restored to the earl of Kildare. Mac Mahon, lord of Orgial, had raised the standard of rebellion in the north, and, joined with the lesser septs, was desolating the lands of the English in that part of the island, until he also was made to bow to the victorious arms of the earl of Ormond. We are informed that during these extensive hostilities, the clergy of Dublin went to the cathedral twice every week in solemn procession to pray for the success of the arms of their ruler against the Irish enemies.

It will be enough to add, that during the latter years of this reign Connaught and Ulster had been again the scene of turbulent disorder, arising out of the old rivalry among the O'Connors, the O'Donnells, and the O'Neills, aided by the host of chiefs of lesser septs who always took part in their dissensions. These quarrels presented the usual amount of slaughter and rapine, and offered no incident of any importance to enliven the recital. They assisted powerfully in giving success to the arms of the English, by weakening the enemies with whom they had to contend.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONDITION OF IRELAND DURING THE EARLIER PART OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VI.



IT has been seen in the foregoing history, that the great chiefs of Ulster, the O'Donnells and the O'Neills, the latter more especially, were the only descendants of the ancient Irish princes who possessed anything like the unity of power required to render them formidable enemies, except by the hurried inroads and depredations which were favoured by the habits of the natives and the character of their country. Nearly the whole extent of the island was at the time of which we are now speaking covered with petty chieftains, Irish and Anglo-Irish, who were in a state of unceasing warfare with each other, and whose only occupation was to watch for opportunities of making predatory incursions into the territory of their neighbours, whether English or Irish, and to carry these designs into effect. Bad government in the English pale had allowed this evil to gain a head, until its borders had been gradually trespassed upon and occupied by the Irish enemy, against whom, along the whole extent of its frontiers, it was reduced to present little more than a defensive attitude; but the Irish were too much divided among themselves to obtain any great advantages, and the weakness of the English power in Ireland was not yet so great that it could not make an effective stand against any serious attack that could be made on a particular point.

At the moment when Henry VI. was placed on the throne of England, the English in Ireland were threatened with serious hostilities by the Irish of Ulster, who had become more formidable by an alliance between the two chiefs of Tirconnell and Tyrone. During the year 1422, the Ulster chieftains directed their hostilities chiefly against the Irish of northern Connaught, and against the degenerate, or at least independent, English of that part, who enjoyed less of the sympathy of the English government; but, in 1423, they marched in great force against the English in Orgial, carried

their depredations to Dundalk and Louth, and then proceeding into Meath, they there gained a great victory over the English forces assembled to oppose them, in consequence of which the English were compelled to purchase their peace by binding themselves to pay a regular pension, which had now become so usual on the borders of the English pale under the name of "black rent."

The earl of Ormond, who had been appointed lord-lieutenant in 1420, retained his office during the first months of the new reign, and then resigned it into the hands of Richard Talbot archbishop of Dublin, who acted as lord-lieutenant during a short interval. The archbishop held a parliament at Trim, which did little for the relief of the government, being chiefly occupied in examining into the delinquencies of the ex-chancellor Merbury, who had been turned out of his office for his conduct in the preceding reign. Archbishop Talbot appears to have been chosen merely as a temporary substitute in place of the lord-lieutenant Ormond, for in the same year Edmund Mortimer, earl of March and Ulster, was appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and shortly afterwards the English privy council announced in a letter from the king to the archbishop of Dublin, that the earl of March was preparing to embark for Ireland with a large army, in order to assume the government in person.

In the meanwhile, the earl of March had appointed as his deputy Edward Dantsey bishop of Meath, a prelate of English birth, who had but lately come into Ireland, and who harboured all the prejudices which were then entertained in England against the Anglo-Irish of the old blood as well as against the natives. When the bishop presented his commission to the Irish council of state, it was observed that it was sealed with the private seal of the earl of March, on which the old English, headed by the haughty archbishop Talbot, repudiated the appointment as illegal, unless made under the great seal of England, and refused to

take the bearer of it as their deputed governor. A violent contention arose between them and the new English in the council, which ended, however, in their receiving the deputy, in consideration of the damage and distress which might arise from the immediate want of a chief governor; but the honour thus conferred upon him drew upon him the hatred of his opposers, against which he had to contend for several years. The new deputy immediately called a parliament, to consult on the imminent perils with which the English possessions in Ireland were threatened, and a severe statute was passed against the defacers of the king's coin in Ireland. The usual resolutions to proceed with vigour against the Irish insurgents were also passed, and the pension of eighty marks, previously paid to Mac Murrrough for keeping the peace in Munster, was renewed to his successor in the chieftainship, Gerald Cavenagh.

It was at this time that the invasion by the Irish of Ulster, and the defeat of the English army in Meath, as mentioned above, struck the Anglo-Irish government with alarm, and the earl of Ormond appears to have been hastily sent over from England to their assistance with a formidable body of English soldiers. The Irish chroniclers describe in rather strong language the effect produced on their countrymen by this new arrival of "Saxons." Ormond immediately marched into the plains of Monaghan, Armagh, and Down, took some of the strongholds of the Irish, and drove the insurgents before him, and for a time checked the power of the O'Donnells and the O'Neills. Towards the Michaelmas of 1423, the superiority of the English was still further ensured by the arrival of the earl of March, attended by another powerful body of English soldiers; but the expectations entertained from the personal influence of this nobleman were disappointed by his sudden death by the plague, which occurred in his own castle of Trim, at the beginning of February, 1424.

The policy now adopted towards Ireland was evidently one of vigour, and, on the death of the earl of March, the veteran warrior Talbot, now lord Furnival, was appointed to the lord-lieutenancy. We learn from the native annalists, that many of the Irish chiefs had presented themselves before the earl of March to renew their promises of fidelity to the English government, and were conciliated by his moderation, and that the great chief-

tains of Ulster were at Trim on the same errand at the time of his sudden death. As soon as that event was known, they hastened to make their escape, but were arrested by the people of Meath, and delivered as prisoners into the hands of lord Furnival, who had lost no time in placing himself at the head of the English forces in that province. They consented to make their submissions to the new governor, and were set at liberty, with the exception of two chiefs of the families of O'Donnell and O'Neill, who were detained in custody to answer to some special accusations, and carried to Dublin; but they were both set at liberty within a short time, on the payment of heavy ransoms by their kinsmen. In less than a year after his appointment, lord Furnival resigned his office into the hands of the earl of Ormond, who followed the same energetic policy.

That this policy did produce the desired effect on the Irish chieftains is proved by their indentures of submission, which are still preserved among the Irish records, in which they acknowledged themselves vassals to the king of England, and engaged not only to keep his peace, but to assist him against his enemies and rebels. They further renounced all title to the lands which they had seized from the English settlers, and agreed to pay a fine as an atonement for their offence in seizing upon them; and they relinquished expressly the tribute or pension which had been paid by the English for their protection under the title of "black rent." Some bound themselves to serve with their followers in the king's army, at the summons of his deputy in Ireland; and the great O'Neill made a formal resignation of the possessions and revenues formerly belonging to the earls of Ulster, and acknowledged himself as the vassal of their heir, Richard duke of York, who succeeded to the earldom of Ulster after the death of his brother, the earl of March. Some of the chiefs of the degenerate English were compelled to enter into similar treaties, and the De Berminghams in particular were made to deliver hostages to the earl of Ormond for their obedience.

These events were followed by two or three years of unusual tranquillity, during which a number of obscure names appear in quick succession as those of chief governors of Ireland. A feud between the O'Rourkes and O'Reillys, which alarmed the English of Meath, was the only event that threatened the borders of the pale till the year 1430,

when the Irish of Ulster began again to give uneasiness to the English government by their turbulence. They were encouraged by the numerous parties of Scots, who, driven away by the troubles at home, landed from time to time on the northern coasts of Ireland, and willingly joined the natives in their hostilities against the English. The example set in the north was soon followed in other parts of the borders, and there seemed to be a general spirit of revolt and insurrection, which threatened the English province in every quarter. In the year last mentioned, the Irish parliament presented a petition to the king, the object of which was to obtain supplies from England, in which they gave a very discouraging view of the state of the country, exaggerated, no doubt, in order to give a stronger colour to their petition. They stated that all the Irish enemies and English rebels in the land, "with great multitudes of Scots, are confederate and sworn together, and have laboured evermore, and yet do, to make a final conquest of the land, and to put the liege people to be tributary to them." The parliament represented in proof of the extent of the danger, that little more than the single county of Dublin remained quiet in the hands of the English, and that the enemies and rebels—that is, the native chiefs and the degenerate English—had either taken possession of, or rendered tributary to them, nearly all the counties of Limerick, Tipperary, Kilkenny, and Wexford, in the south, and nearly all those of Carlow, Kildare, Meath, and Orgial, in the north.

In this year the Irish annalists boast that Owen O'Neill marched with his forces into the plain of Louth, plundered the English possessions there with little opposition, and burnt the fortress of Dundalk, "and having compelled the inhabitants to submit and pay him tribute, he returned home with triumph and victory." Immediately afterwards, the same chieftain marched into Meath, where he was joined by some of the O'Connors, the Mac Geoghegans, O'Melachlins, and others, and together they ravaged nearly the whole of Westmeath, and we are told that the chiefs of the English of that province, the Nugents, Plunketts, Herberts, and others, were obliged to repair to O'Neill and pay him their tribute, in order to relieve the country from his presence, after which he again "returned home victoriously and triumphantly." Next year the English of Meath resumed their courage, and began to

retaliate. They first slew Con O'Melachlin, who laid claim to the title of king of Meath, in an attack upon his clan; and then they proceeded against the Irish in the county of Cavan, where they received a severe check from the Mac Mahons. About the same time Mac Murrough of Leinster invaded the county of Dublin, gained some advantages over the English who defended it, and had collected a large booty, when he was defeated with considerable loss in a second encounter with the people of Dublin, who had pursued him to recapture the plunder.

The pride of O'Neill and O'Donnell had no sooner been raised by their partial successes against the English settlements, than they began to quarrel with each other, and with their Irish neighbours. Early in these dissensions, the lord of Tyrone, while engaged apparently in a petty incursion, was slain by the sept of the O'Kanes. He was succeeded by his nephew Owen O'Neill, who was no sooner inaugurated with the usual ceremonies attending the election of the chiefs of his nation, than he found himself engaged in an obstinate war with the O'Donnells, which was carried on with varied success for some months. At the same time, Manus mac Mahon of Monaghan, a partizan of the O'Neills, was distinguishing himself by his inveterate hostility against the English of the south of Ulster; and the Irish annalists tell us that he ornamented the inclosure of the garden of his house at Baile-na-Lurgan by fixing Englishmen's ghastly heads on the tops of the stakes of the fence, "hideous and horrible spectacles to the beholders." Another chief of the same family, Brian mac Mahon, joined the English against his kinsman Manus, and marched with them into Orgial, where they laid waste the barony of Dartry, and then proceeded to the plain of Arinagh, where they collected a great booty, destroyed the provisions, and levied contributions, without making any distinction between laymen and ecclesiastics. In another part of the island, O'Carroll the Irish lord of Ely (in the districts now known as Tipperary and the King's County), had provoked the earl of Ormond to invade his territory, which he plundered and burnt. In Leinster, Mac Murrough was again in arms, and committed great depredations, in the course of which the English experienced a severe defeat.

In the spring which followed these events, the war between the O'Neills and the O'Don-

nells was carried into the county of Antrim, whither O'Donnell and his forces marched to assist the Mac Quillans, powerful chiefs of that district, who were also supported by the English family of the Savages of Down. The Scots of the isles came in great force to assist O'Neill, and, suddenly landing on the coast of Antrim, defeated O'Donnell, Mac Quillan, and the Savages with great slaughter, and drove the remains of their army to the south, and then they joined with the army of Tyrone and marched to plunder and desolate the country of Tirconnell. There, however, they were met by O'Donnell's wife, and some of the chiefs of Tirconnell, who made their peace with O'Neill and the Scots. Meanwhile O'Donnell himself and his ally Mac Quillan, driven from the territory of the latter and separated from Tirconnell, made their way into Meath, and there threw themselves into the arms of the lord-lieutenant, sir Thomas Stanley, and joined themselves in close alliance with O'Neill's English enemies. They returned with greater force into Ulster, and plundered Armagh and the surrounding country. Finding themselves still unequal to prolong the contest with O'Neill in this quarter, the Mac Quillans remained in Orgial, under protection of the English of that district, while O'Donnell marched through Meath to Athlone, and thence threw himself into that scene of never-ceasing turbulence, North Connaught. There he succeeded in making his peace with O'Neill. The desolations of warfare were during this summer (1432) followed by so great a famine in Ireland, that the year was long afterwards remembered by the popular title of "the summer of slight acquaintance" (*samhra na mear-aithne*), because "no one would recognize either friend or relative on account of the greatness of the famine."

O'Donnell's fidelity to his new allies, the English, was of short continuance, for early in the next year we find him in close alliance with the chief of Tyrone, making war on a rival O'Donnell and on the Mac Quillans; and soon afterwards O'Neill and O'Donnell marched together, with the whole strength of the Irish of Ulster, into the English settlements of Meath and Orgial, compelled the English of Dundalk to pay their tribute, and spread desolation through the open country. The forces of Tyrone went in one direction to destroy some of the English castles, while those of Tirconnell, under O'Donnell and his son Turlough, separated from them to plunder a neighbour-

ing district. While they were thus engaged, on Michaelmas day 1433, the lord-lieutenant, sir Thomas Stanley, with the English of the pale, came first upon O'Neill, who, having received timely intelligence, drew off his men, and succeeded in making his escape into Tyrone, leaving his allies behind him. The English, consisting chiefly of horsemen, proceeded immediately against the latter, overtook them, and made a great slaughter. Among the slain were Turlough O'Donnell, the heir to the chieftainship of Tirconnell, and several other chieftains of distinction. O'Donnell himself, with other chiefs of his family, were taken prisoners and sent in fetters to Dublin; his capture was looked upon as an event of so much importance, that at the beginning of the following year he was sent over to England to be committed to the Tower of London.

Instead of sympathising in the misfortune of his ally, O'Neill immediately turned his arms against the territory which was left almost defenceless by his capture. At the beginning of the following year, in the midst of a winter which had had no equal in men's memories for its severity, the chieftain of Tyrone entered the modern county of Fermanagh to plunder the Mac Guires. The latter took advantage of the solid ice which covered the whole expanse of Lough Erne to transport their property to a place of safety, and then assembled their fighting men, to make head against the invaders. But when Mac Guire and O'Neill met, they laid aside their hostilities—probably O'Neill saw that the plunder was beyond his reach—and they agreed to join in seeking a more profitable war by invading the plains of Tirconnell, whence each returned home laden with booty. Another invasion of Tirconnell, the same year, ended in the triumph of O'Neill, who behaved towards his enemies with treachery and cruelty. Many vain attempts were made to obtain the release of the chieftain of Tirconnell, Niall O'Donnell, but in vain, and some of the O'Connors, allied to him by marriage, and more generous than O'Neill, made war upon the English to revenge his capture, to use the words of the annalist, "burning, plundering, and slaying."

The war between the chiefs of Tyrone and Tirconnell was gradually degenerating into a vast and rather confused civil contention, in which O'Neill fought against O'Neill, and O'Donnell against O'Donnell, and the English of Meath and Ulster, taking part with O'Neills and O'Donnells, revenged

themselves for the injuries they had sustained when the Irish chiefs were acting in unity. The contentions, thus generated, lasted two or three years, with a vast attendance of misery and destruction. In the beginning of 1438, Lionel lord Wells was appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and, according to the Irish annalists, soon after his arrival he was taken prisoner by the Irish, in resisting the hostilities of the O'Connors, who still warred upon the English in revenge of the feud of their kinsman O'Donnell. The liberty of the lord-lieutenant was obtained by exchange for some of the numerous Irish prisoners in Dublin castle; but it appears to have been now thought politic to set O'Donnell himself at liberty, as a measure of conciliation, and he was conveyed from London to the Isle of Man. The Irish chroniclers tell us that a hundred marks were given to "ascertain his ransom," but the negotiations were suddenly brought to a close by the unexpected death of the chieftain, who is described by his countrymen as "the most prized hostage in Tirconnell and Tyrone, and of the north in general, the chief subject of conversation of the north of Ireland in his time, and the spoiler and subduer of the English, until at length they were revenged of him for all he had committed against them." Niall O'Donnell was succeeded by his brother Naghtan O'Donnell, who had already distinguished himself in the political turmoils which had ravaged the north of Ireland. This year was, throughout the island, a year of trouble; among other deaths in its long obituary was that of Cathal O'Connor king of Connaught, whose succession was a new object of contention; and to crown the misfortunes of the year, a dreadful plague broke out at Dublin, which not only carried off a large number of its inhabitants, but extended into other parts of the island, and counted many persons of distinction among its victims.

A temporary calm seems to have followed among the native Irish, which will allow us to return to the more immediate affairs of the English government. The dissensions among the Irish at this time gave it less uneasiness than the turbulence of its own subjects, and, especially, the continual and gradual degeneracy which at length made English settlers more Irish than the natives themselves. To ward against this evil, the Anglo-Irish parliament, in their horror of everything Irish, or resembling Irish, passed their time in repeating and

confirming statutes against marrying, fostering, or trafficking with the natives, as well as against purveyance, protection of kernes or robbers, and against arbitrary exactions in the prosecution of hostilities. It had become more and more the policy of the English court to send to Ireland governors who had no Irish interests, and who were therefore supposed to be free from Irish prejudices, and many of these were persons of obscure birth. The "old English," dissatisfied at the neglect shown to themselves, and supported by the great Anglo-Irish lords, continued their complaints to the king of the misrepresentations to which his Irish subjects were exposed, and of the ignorance and insufficiency of those who were sent from England to rule over them, or to be placed in offices of trust among people with whose character and interests they were unacquainted. They spoke with bitterness of odious distinctions which had been made between them and their brethren in England,* and prayed that they might be considered and treated as Englishmen. The feelings which gave birth to these petitions, led to divisions and disaffections among the inhabitants of Ireland of pure English blood, which soon degenerated into violent mutual feuds among themselves, and rebellion against the government.

Foremost among the leaders of these feuds stood the chiefs of the two great branches of the Geraldines, Kildare and Desmond, who had been treated with marked neglect, and often with harshness, by the Lancastrian princes. Events of a romantic character had placed a man of grasping and unscrupulous ambition at the head of the latter of these two families. Thomas fitz Gerald, the young heir of Desmond, who had succeeded to the title as sixth earl, was return-

* The extraordinary jealousy between the English and Irish in England is proved by a variety of contemporary documents, and was especially exhibited under the princes of the house of Lancaster. It was felt severely by scholars who repaired to England to study in the universities or law-schools. About the time of which we are now speaking, an act of parliament was passed in England, ordering that all persons born in Ireland should quit England within a limited time, excepting only benefited clergymen, graduates in either university, and persons who held lands in England, were married there, or had English parents, and these were obliged to give security for their future good behaviour. In 1438, under the government of Lionel lord Wells, at the same time that a new act was passed in England to compel Irishmen to return home, a statute was passed in Ireland to prevent any more of them from passing into England.

ing home from hunting, when the shades of night overtook him, and he sought shelter in the house of one of his tenants near Abbeyfeale, in the county of Limerick; and there he conceived so violent a passion for the beautiful daughter of his host, Catherine mac Cormac, that he shortly afterwards married her. The distinction between the different ranks of society was in the middle ages so superstitiously revered, that even by the earl's humbler followers the high blood of Desmond was considered to be so utterly degraded by this unequal match, that, when his ambitious uncle James encouraged the dissatisfaction in order to expel him from his rights, friends and followers abandoned him at once, and he retired to Rouen in Normandy, where he died in 1420. James of Desmond took possession of the title and estates, and was eventually confirmed in them by act of parliament.

One of the first acts of injustice by which this nobleman marked his ill-gotten rank, was to possess himself of no less than half of what was then called the kingdom of Cork, by means of an illegal grant from Robert Cogan, and he established himself in possession of it in spite of the reclamations of the families of Carew and Courcy, to whom it ought to have descended by the heirs general. A feud between the families of Botiler and Talbot had been carried into the very councils of government, and was supported on one side by the factious archbishop of Dublin, Richard Talbot, and on the other by the lord-lieutenant, the earl of Ormond. By taking part with the latter, Desmond had so far ingratiated himself with those in power that he was enabled to continue his own private tyrannies and oppressions with impunity; and he was allowed gradually to strengthen himself to a degree of independence which would have drawn upon him the strongest hostilities of former governors.

It had become now the usual practice to appoint a lord-lieutenant of Ireland who was allowed to absent himself from his post, and who named his own lord deputy. From 1438 to 1442, Lionel lord Wells held the higher office, and, during the latter part of the period of his lieutenancy, the earl of Ormond had acted as his deputy. It appears, however, that the influence of his grand enemy, the archbishop of Dublin, was powerful in the Irish parliament, and that the latter or the principles he advocated, were popular among the English of the pale; and, as a change in the supreme governor was apprehended

and most people's eyes were already turned on the earl of Ormond as the successor to the lord-lieutenancy, archbishop Talbot and his friends determined to use their utmost exertions to defeat an appointment which would be so hostile to their interests. It seems more than probable that the earl's administration was in many respects not free from blame; and a parliament being held at Dublin in the latter part of the year 1441, the influence of his opponents was so great, that a series of articles were agreed to, complaining of ill-government in general, and containing direct charges against Ormond. These were sent to the king in London, in the hope that they would prevent the so much dreaded appointment. In these articles the parliament began by advocating the principle so popular in England, but which they had themselves formerly declaimed against, that Ireland was best governed by men who, born in England, were foreign to its prejudices, and that a man of great Irish estates and interests like the earl of Ormond was not fitted for the office. Their views were still fixed on some nobleman whose high rank might command obedience where the obscurer rank of the ordinary governors met only with contempt. They, therefore, prayed the king to ordain "a mighty lord of England" to be their lieutenant, declaring that people were more ready to obey an English lord than one born in Ireland, because they knew that Englishmen kept better justice, executed the laws, and favoured more the common people, than any Irishman "ever did or is ever likely to do." They further represented how necessary it was for the king's interests in Ireland that he should appoint a man of vigour and activity in the field as well as in the council, and, with an intentional reflection on some weaknesses Ormond had exhibited in this respect, they stated that none of these qualities had been "seen or found in the said earl, for both he is aged, unwieldy, and unlusty to labour, and hath lost in substance all his castles, towns, and lordships that he had in Ireland: wherefore it is not likely that he should keep, conquer, or get any grounds to the king, that thus hath lost his own." Many of the earl's lands had, indeed, been especially exposed to the incursions and encroachments of the Irish during the late reigns. The parliament then proceeded to rehearse a number of instances of tyranny and injustice which the earl had perpetrated during his administration, and which resembled gene-

rally those which had been laid to the charge of several previous governors, show us how many great abuses continued to prevail throughout every department of the Irish administration, and to remind the king that the earl of Ormond stood impeached of "many great treasons" by the three previous lord-lieutenants; and the archbishop of Dublin, who evidently drew up the document, adds, in his own person, that there had been "many and divers other great things misdone by the said earl, which I may not declare because of mine order."

We know nothing of the proceedings upon this complaint, but that it excited no great attention is evident from the fact, that within a few weeks of the time when it was laid before the privy council, on the 27th of February, 1442, the earl of Ormond was appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland. This signal triumph over his accusers appears to have increased his pride, and he showered favours and rewards on those who had supported him more lavishly than was prudent or even consistent with the interests of the English government. Of these the most considerable was James earl of Desmond, who profited by his influence with the lord-lieutenant to obtain a patent for the government and custody of the counties of Waterford, Cork, Limerick, and Kerry, over which he had already assumed an almost regal jurisdiction. Soon after this, the personal independence which he affected, was, to a certain degree, authorized by the grant of a privilege, extraordinary in the case of a man in his position, permitting him during life to absent himself from all future parliaments, requiring him only to send an authorized and competent proxy in his place. The same patent gave him the power to purchase any lands he pleased, by whatever service they were held of the crown, a licence by which he contrived to evade all further question relating to the illegal acquisition of territory from Robert Cogan.

The archbishop and his party were not discouraged by their failure on this occasion, but they continued their opposition to the new governor with the utmost perseverance; and before the year of his appointment was ended, the divisions and troubles thus caused had risen to such a height, that it was found necessary to cause a detailed report on the state of the Irish government to be drawn up for the consideration of the English privy council. This report, compiled by the treasurer of Ireland, Giles Thorndon, gives a

vivid description of the disunited state of the Irish administration, and of the spirit of party, which had arisen to such a height, even in the king's council, that "no business, whether for the royal service, or for suit of party, was allowed due process, nor execution in law, where it touched any of the two said parties." In fact, it was evident that the government of the island, in almost all its departments, was paralyzed by the violence of these dissensions.

Ormond soon found that he had little to expect from the gratitude of his great ally James of Desmond, whose pride and arrogance had only been puffed up by the favours that had been so lavishly bestowed upon him. His power, by so many injudicious grants of exemptions and privileges, had been raised so high, that he began to set the government of the lord-lieutenant at defiance; and when the latter was preparing to lead the forces at his disposal to the border, to reduce the insolence of some of the "degenerate" English chiefs who had given him provocation, he was obliged to leave them in impunity, in order to march hastily against the more formidable power of the refractory earl. After having commenced a desultory warfare of that kind which merely produced havoc and destruction among the unfortunate peasantry and tenants without materially diminishing the strength of either party, the lord-lieutenant weakly treated with his antagonist as with an independent prince, and agreed to grant the earl of Desmond a truce for one year. The latter employed this period in strengthening himself, and, deserting the party he had hitherto supported, he endeavoured to destroy the power of the lord-lieutenant by intriguing with his enemies in the council and parliament.

The latter were as active as ever, and early in 1444, a new complaint was exhibited against the earl of Ormond before the English privy council, which contained no less than fifteen distinct charges, many of which were of a grave character. One of them shows, that the lord-lieutenant had not scrupled to adopt any measure that offered itself as likely to put a stop to the continual passage over sea of petitions against his government. He is accused of having proposed a bill to the Irish commons in two parliaments and two great councils, to punish with forfeiture of lands and goods all who should complain to the king of any wrong done to them in Ireland, "unless the complaint were made under the great seal,

or by an act of parliament, or great council." This was of course equivalent to giving the governor power to stop appeals against himself; and it was rejected by the commons on the ground that "it was treason to make a statute to prevent a man from complaining to his king." They further intimated their belief, that the earl of Ormond had other views by this measure, as it would give him the opportunity of enriching himself with a great number of forfeited estates, and he is charged, in several instances, of having appropriated the public money to his own uses.

The popularity of the lord-lieutenant in Ireland seems to have been diminishing during the latter part of his government, and it is said that the English court began to listen more willingly to the complaints against him. On one occasion we are informed that a special mandate came from the king, summoning the earl to repair to his presence to answer to the complaints which had been made against him. Ormond summoned the nobility and gentry of the pale to attend him at Drogheda, and, showing them the royal mandate, informed them that he was now going to render an account of his three years' administration, which he asserted had been conducted with fidelity and success, at the foot of the throne. He is said to have then addressed the assembly in words to the following effect: "The English agents who bring the king's orders are here before you, and in their presence I boldly appeal to my most inveterate enemy, if any such there be in this assembly. Let him stand forward and declare in what I have offended; let him point out a single instance in which the subject hath suffered by my injustice, or the state by my neglect. Here let me be brought to the severest scrutiny, instead of being insidiously accused in my absence." It is added, that the effect of this bold address, so contrary in spirit to the multitudinous charges which remain on record among the papers of the privy council, was so complete, that the whole assembly bore witness to the integrity of his administration, and to his fidelity and services, and that an address from his Irish subjects in the earl's favour was presented to the king, who thereupon allowed him to remain in office. It is evident, however, that the earl's government could not have been extensively popular, for, though a few men of rank made representations in his favour, the commons, headed by archbishop Talbot and his parti-

zans, continued to petition against him, until at length the dissatisfaction became so great, that it was determined to replace him. Other causes had perhaps combined to show the necessity of giving new vigour to the Irish government, and of sending some ruler able to cope with the difficulties of the moment, and likely by his military talents to repress the now increasing power of the native Irish. Accordingly, on the 17th of July, 1446, the old warrior sir John Talbot, whose gallant exploits had now been rewarded with the new title of earl of Shrewsbury, was again appointed to the lord-lieutenancy, and, after the reins of government had been for a brief period lodged in the hands of the archbishop of Dublin, who was at length allowed to exult over the defeat of his rival, the earl of Shrewsbury landed in Ireland, accompanied with a reinforcement of seven hundred chosen soldiers. Soon after his arrival he was rewarded with the Irish titles of earl of Waterford and baron of Dungarvan, the latter of which had been taken from the family of Desmond.

Although peace seemed restored to Ulster by the reconciliation of O'Donnell and O'Neill in 1440, and several successive years witnessed none of those great outbreaks which had been so frequent in the years preceding, yet the country was still far from tranquil, while a devastating plague, which for a time visited the island annually, fully made up for any deficiencies in the constant destruction of human life that resulted from the brief cessation of sanguinary feuds. In the year just mentioned, O'Connor Faly, one of the chiefs of the western borders, was defeated in a plundering expedition into Meath, by the earl of Desmond. About two years later we find the O'Neills again at war with the O'Donnells, and calling in the assistance of the English to war with them and share in their booty. Not long after this, the English of Meath and Dublin were defeated by the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles in an incursion into the territory of those septs in Wicklow: while in a feud between the English and Irish of Wexford, Murtough Cavenagh, the son of Mac Murrough, who now held the chieftainship of Leinster, was slain. The Irish chieftain immediately assembled his fighting men, and ravaged the lands of the English of Wexford and Leinster, until they appeased his wrath by paying eight hundred marks as an eric for the death of his son. Not long after these events in Leinster, the borders on the side of Ossory

were troubled by a desperate feud between the sept of Mac Gillapatrik and the Butlers. This quarrel was continued with violence till the next year, and was the cause of much havoc and slaughter; and it had scarcely been appeased, when one still more threatening burst out in the country of Clanrickard between the De Burghs, though the two parties were eventually reconciled. It was at this time also that the "degenerated" De Berminghams, joining with Calvagh O'Connor, or O'Connor Faly, invaded Meath, plundered the English of that district without mercy, and exacted tribute and hostages. This feud was called by the Irish minstrels the "war of *caimin*," and is said to have arisen from a personal offence given by the treasurer of Meath to the son of the chief of the De Berminghams. They had met in the great court of the town of Trim, where De Bermingham came under a safe conduct from the lord-lieutenant, the earl of Ormond, when, for some reason or other, the treasurer of Meath struck him a *caimin* or stroke of his finger on the nose. Incensed at this insult, young De Bermingham stole privately out of the town, fled to O'Connor Faly, and joined with him in invading the English province; and the Irish writer who has recorded this event adds that "it is hard to know that ever was such abuse better revenged than the said *caimin*."

In the year 1444, the date of the war between the lord-lieutenant and the earl of Desmond already mentioned, the flame of discord appeared to be lighted up throughout the whole extent of Ireland. A war in Ulster, commenced among the Irish themselves, soon fell upon the neighbouring English, and the O'Neills again carried devastation through the plain of Orgial, and plundered the suburbs of Dundalk, the town itself being spared on the payment of sixty marks and two tuns of wine. The various septs of the O'Connors, Mac Donoughs, O'Kellys, Mac Geoghegans, and others, were all engaged in the same turbulent contentions. In one of the numerous incursions to which the English territory was exposed, O'Connor Faly experienced a serious defeat. The year which followed was equally turbulent, and one of the old native annalists has left us more minute particulars relating to it than the chroniclers usually give on these barbarous commotions. It appears that the war was begun in Leinster by the restless sept of the Cavenaghs, whose chief, Mac Gerald Cavenagh, had been joined by a

strong party from Connaught, under Turlough mac Dubgail, who had been lured to this distant service by the hope of prey. The two chiefs, thus united, after having plundered and burnt far and wide, sparing neither English nor Irish, went to the fair of the feast of the holy cross in Clan-Tuathail, seized upon the town, and killed or took and stripped all they pleased in it, and then took the chief, O'Tuathail, an old man who was respected by his clan, yet in spite of this, they stripped him also, and then sent him adrift, because they seem to have considered him too old to be ransomed. "After that," continues the annalist, "they sat down in the town, and consumed the town's provision in meat, and they drank its drink, or beer and wine, and two or three of those who fled into the church for refuge were choaked, one of whom was O'Tuathail's daughter; and they went to the church after that, and took out by the polls all men therein, and so Mae Gerald Cavenagh left Clan-Tuathail." Turlough mac Dubgail and his men were not so fortunate in their return through Leinster, for they were set upon by the Mae Geoghegans, who stripped them of their plunder and even of their clothes,* and retained their chiefs in captivity till they were liberated by the payment of ransoms.

The same year Meath was thrown into confusion by the feuds between the English and the O'Dalys, each party committing the usual depredations on the other. This was followed by "a great war," produced by a new invasion of Meath by the De Berminghams, in conjunction with O'Connor Faly and the Mac Geoghegans and other Irish chiefs, in which the invaders "preyed and burnt towns, and eat much corn, and took many prisoners from the English." After having perpetrated all the havoc they could, they "made peace;" and then the Mac Geoghegans and others went to the English for the purpose of negotiating, but they were immedi-

* We may form some notion of the state to which the country was reduced on these constant plundering excursions, from the circumstance that the invaders not only carried off or destroyed everything they could lay their hands upon, but they stripped the men, and especially the women, on account of the greater value of their clothes, perfectly naked, without respect to persons, and left them without covering or place of refuge, until they could reach some friendly tribe who had not suffered, in doing which many naturally perished of the privations they had to undergo on the way. We frequently find this relentless system of plundering described in the wars and insurrections of much later times.

ately seized, and only set at liberty after all the English prisoners had been delivered. After we have read of these and a multitude of other similar commotions throughout Connaught and in the south, we are not astonished to find the annalist winding up the year by informing us that there was "a great mortality of cattle and want of victuals and dearth of corn throughout Ireland."

Time seemed to have little effect in pacifying the widely spread spirit of evil, and one of the chroniclers begins the next year with the observation, "a hard year was this." It began with "horrible wars," as one chronicler terms them, between O'Connor Faly and the English of Meath, during which a great part of that province is said to have been plundered and burnt, and many of its inhabitants slain, the plundering excursions being carried to the ancient hill of Tara (beyond Trim) and almost to the neighbourhood of Dublin. Connaught was devastated not only by one, but by a variety of rivalries for its now divided chieftainship, yet, when a sanguinary domestic war, which desolated the whole of Thomond, ended in the capture and imprisonment of its chief, O'Brien, the "degenerate" De Burghs of Clanrickard could find strength to assist the Irish against their English enemies, and they rescued O'Brien by force. In various other parts of the island, the usual war of kindred against kindred was producing the same disastrous results.

Such was the state of Ireland when Talbot earl of Shrewsbury, or, as he was still called by the Irish annalists, lord Furnival, landed in Ireland and assumed the government at the same time that he took the command of the army. The face of things was soon changed within the English settlements, and the English "grew so strong that they caused O'Connor Faly to make peace, and to send many beeves to the king's kitchen." The progress of the new lord-lieutenant, as far as we can trace it in the slight and imperfect notices which occur in the native annalists, was marked by vigour and severity. The O'Dalys, who had infested Meath with their depredations, were now "most wickedly" plundered by their former victims, and their chief was taken prisoner and placed in close confinement. One of the De Berminghams, who had likewise been taken and sent prisoner to the lord-lieutenant, was executed as a traitor and quartered. These events occurred before the end of the year 1446. The havoc of intestine war had had its effect, and the next year opens with an announce-

ment of "great famine in the spring of this year throughout all Ireland, so that men were then wont to eat all manner of herbs for the most part." This was followed by a pestilence, which ravaged the island during the summer and autumn of 1447, and did perhaps as much as the arms of the relentless Talbot towards restoring tranquillity. Among the Irish chieftains captured by the lord-lieutenant during this year, the one most lamented by the Irish annalists was Felim O'Reilly lord of Breffny, who is represented by the native writers as having been treacherously seized at Trim when he came on a peaceful mission; he died soon afterwards in captivity, attacked by the prevailing pestilence. One of the Irish annalists, while lamenting the fate of this chieftain, vents his execrations against the English ruler—"This Furnival was a son of curses for his venom, and a devil for his evils, and the learned say of him that there came not from the time of Herod, by whom Christ was crucified, any one so wicked in evil deeds."

The severity thus deprecated, which was exerted equally against native Irish and degenerated English, soon produced its effect in giving somewhat more security to the English borders; and the lord-lieutenant called a parliament at Trim early in 1447, which prosecuted the Irish enemies as bitterly with civil proscription as their new governor pursued them with the sword. It was enacted, among other things, that "any man who did not keep his upper lip shaved, might be treated as an Irish enemy;" and there were other equally severe enactments against kernes or retainers, against robbery by denizenized Irishmen, against clipped or counterfeit coin and the debased coinage called O'Reilly's money, and against extravagance in costume.

Talbot seems to have resigned himself entirely into the hands of the faction who had opposed the earl of Ormond, and he even gratified the earl's enemies by preferring against him a charge of high treason on his return to England. Ormond's old enemy, the archbishop of Dublin, who was left deputy during his absence, is said to have carried his prejudices so far as to write a treatise on the abuses of that earl's late government. The warlike prior of Kilmainham, still more violent in his passions, renewed the charge of high treason, and offered to support it by combat. But here the king interposed, and protected the earl from further annoyance.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DUKE OF YORK APPOINTED LORD-LIEUTENANT; WARS OF THE ROSES.



THE period had now arrived in England when the intrigues of contending factions, joined with the rivalry of two families claiming the throne, were rapidly progressing to the explosion which soon afterwards deluged the country with the blood of its own children. From a mere contest between rival competitors for the crown, the movement ended in a great social convulsion. The social system of the middle ages was indeed gradually falling before the new ideas of political and moral freedom that had gone abroad, and as the evils of the old regime were felt heavily under the rule of the weak prince of the house of Lancaster who now held the sceptre, it is not to be wondered at if people's notions of popular freedom were soon associated with the name of the rival house of York.

This rival family had become closely connected with Ireland. Young Edmund earl of March had been sent to govern Ireland at the beginning of Henry's reign, with the evident intention of removing him to a distance from the court. By his death, his brother Richard duke of York became invested with the earldom of Ulster and Cork, the lordships of Connaught, Clare, Trim, and Meath, and the immense Irish estates which had been inherited from the De Burghs and other old Anglo-Irish families. Duke Richard possessed in an eminent degree the qualities necessary for gaining popularity and commanding respect; as a ruler, he was just and impartial, at the same time that he was firm and unbending, and without sacrificing the dignity of his high rank, he exhibited a gentleness and affability of demeanour towards his inferiors which conciliated the love of all; while, as a commander, he was distinguished no less by his resolution and bravery, than by the prudence and circumspection which characterised his undertakings. As regent of France, after the death of the duke of Bedford, and again as the successor of the earl of Warwick, he had supported the declining interests of England in that country with considerable

ability. His position with respect to the throne, and his well known advocacy of popular principles, had made him an object of jealousy to the party who now ruled in the name of king Henry, and it had been their policy to give him such employment as would keep him at a distance. His final return from France threw him into the heat of political faction at a moment when his presence was most to be dreaded; and the court party were glad to seize upon any occasion for removing him to a distance.

The wish of the commons of Ireland, so often repeated, that a prince of the blood, or at least an English nobleman of "high rank" should be chosen for the government of that island, was not forgotten, and the increasing turbulence of the natives furnished the excuse for an extraordinary appointment. It was represented that a general confederacy had been formed among the Irish to expel the English from Ireland, which demanded the immediate presence of an able commander and a governor calculated to command respect, and in 1449 Richard Plantagenet duke of York was appointed lord-lieutenant, with orders to repair immediately to his post. The duke, although he was well aware of the motives which had led to his nomination, was not unwilling to accept the honour thus conferred upon him; he was aware of the influence which his great possessions and hereditary honours there, amounting to not much less than a third part of the kingdom, must secure to him, and he resolved to conciliate the affections of the Anglo-Irish, and thus form a point of support in the high prospects which were now opening upon his aspiring mind. But he made his conditions with the court, and besides insisting that the office should be attended with all the honour and authority which had ever been enjoyed by the most distinguished of his predecessors, he stipulated that it should be secured to him for ten years, that he should receive the whole revenue of Ireland without account, in addition to which he was to have from England an immediate advance of two thousand marks, and an annual pension

of two thousand more, and that he should be empowered to let the king's lands, to dispose of all offices, to levy whatever forces he might consider necessary, and to name his own deputy whenever he chose to return to England. These conditions were reduced to writing by indenture between the king and himself.

Thus was Ireland again treated as an instrument in the factions of party in England, rather than with any view to its own interests. Yet the administration of the princely lord-lieutenant, by its justice and mildness, was far better calculated to promote the peace and prosperity of Ireland than that of any of his predecessors. Even the Irish annalists speak with admiration of the "great glory and pomp" with which the duke presented himself in Ireland in the summer of 1449, and they describe how "the earls" of Ireland repaired to his presence with respect, and speak of the devotion shown by the commons in general, and especially by his dependents in Meath, towards his person. He found the native Irish more occupied with their own feuds than with any designs against the English settlements. The O'Neills of the north, as well as the O'Donnells, were as usual divided among themselves; two rival claimants disputed the chieftainship of the O'Reillys of Muintir-Maelmora; the interior of Connaught was thrown into commotion by the struggles between rival septa of the O'Connors; the degenerate De Burghs of Clanrickard were similarly engaged in mutual hostilities; and similar feuds among the Mac Carthys of Desmond proved fatal to more than one of their chiefs. These commotions were followed in the beginning of the following year, which the Irish annalists describe as "a hard warlike year," by a sanguinary feud among the Maguires of Fermanagh.

It was not till the summer of 1450, that any serious attack was made upon the English who lived in obedience to the government. About that time the Mac Geoghegans issued from the bogs and wild country of Westmeath, threw themselves upon the open country possessed by the English, plundered and burnt several small towns and villages, and committed great devastation. The duke of York raised his banner, collected as strong a body of men as could be brought together in the hurry of the moment, and marched to Mullingar, where one of the Mac Geoghegans approached, with a

large body of horse, to observe them. But the two parties came to an agreement without fighting, and the duke behaved with so much gentleness and moderation that the Irish chieftain boasted among his countrymen, that he had given peace to the lord-lieutenant.

The latter had already begun to experience the inefficiency of the Irish revenues, and the difficulty of obtaining, at so great a distance, the fulfilment of the engagements into which the English court had entered towards him; and at the first intelligence of this insurrection of the Mac Geoghegans, he wrote a pressing letter to his brother, the earl of Salisbury, to urge an immediate attention to his wants. In this letter, which is printed in Hollinshed, and is dated from Dublin on the 15th of June, the duke informs the earl how, since he had last written to the king, "the Irish enemy, that is to say Mac Geoghegan, and with him three or four Irish captains, associated with a great fellowship of English rebels," had risen against the king's peace, to which they were sworn; and he complains that they had "vengeably burnt a great town of mine inheritance in Meath, called Rathmore, and other villages thereabouts, and murdered and burnt both men, women, and children, without mercy;" which enemies, he adds, "he yet assembled in woods and forts, awaiting to do the hurt and grievance to the king's subjects that they can think or imagine." For this cause, he says, he then wrote to the king, beseeching him to hasten "my payment for this land," to the intent that he might hire men in sufficient numbers to resist the malice of the enemy, and punish them in such wise that they might serve as an example to others who might be encouraged to do the same if these offences were suffered to pass with impunity. "For doubtless," he continues, "but if my payment be had in all haste, for to have men of war in defence and safeguard of this land, my power cannot stretch to keep it in the king's obedience, and very necessity will compel me to come into England to live there upon my poor livelihood; for I had liefer be dead, than any inconvenience should fall thereunto by my default, for it shall never be chronicled nor remain in scripture (by the grace of God) that Ireland was lost by my negligence." The duke then alludes, with some apparent exultation, to the recent disasters in France, which had brought so much odium on king Henry's ministers; "for

I have example in other places (more pity it is) for to dread shame, and for to acquit my troth unto the king's highness, as my duty is."

This appears, nevertheless, to have been the only military expedition of any importance which the duke led in person. He was more eminently successful in his efforts to promote unanimity among the English subjects, the object to which he seems to have devoted himself from his first entrance upon the office. The first person of rank whom he received into his councils in Ireland was the earl of Ormond, a warm partizan of the rival house of Lancaster, but whom he effectually conciliated by his courteous treatment and by the respect which he showed for that nobleman's experience in Irish affairs. The pride of the earl of Desmond, who had of late kept aloof in his castles in the south, was still more flattered by the courteous attentions of the great duke, and, although it was difficult to lay aside the rude turbulence which had characterized him during life, he again made his appearance in the council-chamber at Dublin to serve the lord-lieutenant with something approaching to a blind attachment. The latter dexterously took advantage of the birth of his third son George, afterwards duke of Clarence, while at Dublin, to enlist in his favour those strong prejudices and sympathies which the old English had already learnt from their Irish neighbours to attach to the affinity of gossiped, by choosing the two earls of Ormond and Desmond to be his sponsors at the baptismal font.

At the same time the administration of the duke showed a settled resolution to remedy the various abuses and disorders in the government of Ireland which had so often been a subject of complaint. He called a parliament at Dublin, which passed a number of laws for this purpose, among which was one strictly restraining the number of idle and disorderly followers whom the Irish lords still persisted in retaining: it ordained that no lord should entertain more horsemen or footmen than he could support without burden to his neighbours, and that the names of all those who formed his retinue should be returned to the magistrates of his county or borough; it abolished all coyne, cosherings, or other arbitrary exactions; and it ended by declaring that a violation of this statute in any part should be adjudged and punished as felony. Another act was passed in the same parliament, intending to remove

a fruitful source of evil—the vexatious suits of law which were only commenced from motives of hostility towards defendants against whom there was no real ground for accusation; it was enacted that the prosecutor should give security to pay the just damages, if it should appear that the defendant had been wrongfully accused, and that bail should be accepted and the aggrieved party be allowed his suit for false imprisonment. It was at the same time not only made lawful to kill every man found robbing or despoiling the king's liege subjects; but a reward was to be paid to the slayer by the district in which such service was performed. Other laws now passed had for their object to hinder many abuses in the government offices, and to secure a more effectual and impartial administration of justice. The duke soon afterwards held another parliament at Drogheda, in which various acts were passed for reformation in the administration of the laws, and for facilitating the military service, and by which the earl of Ormond was relieved of the charges which had been pressed against him with so much animosity under the influence of the Talbots.

While the duke was thus occupied in his government in Ireland, he was not inattentive to the progress of political discontent in England, and he no doubt kept up a constant communication with his friends about the court. The first popular outbreak that announced the forthcoming storm, was headed by an Irishman by birth, the notorious Jack Cade; its professed object was to place the duke of York on the throne, and many believed that the duke had been the secret abettor of the rebels. The reports relating to his sinister intentions, spread abroad in England by the court party, increased to such a degree, that the duke, with the advice of his friends, determined to repair to London to contradict them in person; and although orders were sent to the sheriffs of Shropshire, Cheshire, and Wales, denouncing him as a traitor, and directing them to hinder his landing, he took advantage of the privilege reserved to him of leaving his post at his own pleasure, and, having eluded the watchfulness of his enemies on the coast, proceeded direct to London, having collected on his road a retinue of about four thousand resolute adherents.

By leaving Ireland with nothing more than his ordinary retinue, the duke gave an effectual denial to the report set abroad by

his enemies, that he intended to invade England with a large army of Irishmen to overthrow the throne of the Lancastrian princes; and he had given a remarkable instance of moderation and apparent neglect of his personal interests by leaving as his deputy in the government of that island the staunch Lancastrian earl of Wiltshire, the son of the earl of Ormond. The popularity of the duke still kept the English who obeyed his government in peace with each other; but when his departure was known to the Irish on the borders, it seemed as though the spell which had bound them were suddenly undone, and they began immediately to return to their former disorders. During the year 1451, the Maguires, the O'Kellys, various septs of the O'Connors, and the Mac Carthys, were all engaged in domestic feuds of a more or less sanguinary character. At the beginning of 1452, Nighthan O'Donnell was murdered, and Tircconnell was again desolated by a war between conflicting claimants to the chieftainship. The chieftain of Tyrone, Owen O'Neill, instead of interfering in this contest, joined with the Maguires in an expedition against the English, and having marched to the Fews or woodlands in the south of Armagh, he encamped there, and sent out predatory parties to plunder the county of Louth, in the course of which he experienced a severe check from the English, and lost many of his men.

Soon after the departure of the duke of York, the earl of Wiltshire, as his deputy, called a parliament at Drogheda; and in the year following, after the insurrection and treacherous capture of the duke of York in Kent, he was appointed in his place lord-lieutenant of Ireland for ten years. Soon afterwards he was recalled to England to assist in the councils of his sovereign, and he left the archbishop of Armagh to act as his deputy. It was probably at this period that the depredations of the O'Neills and some chiefs on the other frontiers, compelled the English government to show somewhat more than its usual activity in repelling attacks; and the old earl of Ormond took the field at the head of a considerable force. He first marched against one of the Irish chiefs of Munster, O'Mulrian, and took and demolished his castle of Owny in the county of Limerick. He next attacked the O'Dempseys of Leix, took their castle, as well as that of Airem, or Irry, where he released one of the De Berminghams from captivity, and he

burnt the latter fortress. From thence he proceeded into Offaly, where O'Connor Faly, who had also captured some of the De Berminghams, came and gave hostages for their delivery. The English then entered Annaly, to reduce the O'Farrells, whose chieftain likewise made his submission to the earl, and not only bought his peace with a tribute, but joined with him in attacking another turbulent sept in the modern county of Longford, where they demolished the castle of Barry, and destroyed the corn in the surrounding country. They next marched to Fore, and thence into Breffny against the O'Reillys, who also submitted unconditionally. The next district visited by the earl was the plain of Orgial, the present county of Louth, which had long been little better than debatable ground between the English and Irish of Ulster, and he there reduced the Mac Mahons to obedience. After having reduced in a similar manner a sept of the O'Neills bordering on the English territory, the earl ended his victorious expedition of six weeks at Ardee, where he died, as it appears, somewhat suddenly, about the end of August.

The bad government of the archbishop of Dublin, or some other cause with which we are unacquainted, rendered it necessary to send back the earl of Wiltshire, who had now succeeded to his father's title of earl of Ormond, to Ireland, but who, after a very brief tenure, resigned his office to sir Edward fitz Eustace, a warlike knight, who was well fitted for the government of the pale under the circumstances of that time. It would appear that after the apparent reconciliation between the king and the duke of York, the title of the latter to the lord-lieutenancy, according to his patent, had been acknowledged, and that the earl of Ormond's patent was therefore set aside. In a patent dated on the twelfth of August, 1453, the king speaks of Fitz Eustace as the deputy of the duke of York; and from this time sir Edward fitz Eustace and the earl of Kildare succeeded each other alternately as the duke's deputies.

On the death of the old earl of Ormond, the Irish on the borders of the English pale, thinking that they were entirely relieved by this event of the only check upon their depredations, had again broken out in insurrection, and carried on their hostilities with various success during the rest of the year and the greater part of the year following. The Mac Geoghegans infested the plains of Westmeath, and gained a victory over a party

of English soldiers who were escorting to Dublin a large body of fish-merchants, laden with their fish-packs; they put many of the merchants to death; and the annalist who has recorded this event, tells us, that "no man living can give account of the multitude of eels lost or left there." This battle was long known popularly as the *maidhm-an-aig*, or "defeat of the fish." The English had their revenge for this mishap in a victory, not far from Mullingar, over one of the most renowned of the chieftains of this family, Farrell Roe Oge mac Geoghegan, who was himself slain, and his head cut off and carried in triumph to Dublin. The turbulent O'Connor Faly also met with a serious disaster about this time; for he had invaded the district of Kildare, when he was surprised by Fitz Eustace, and his men put to flight. In the hurry of the escape, O'Connor's horse fell to the ground; but his son stopped, and remounted him. The horse immediately fell a second time, and this was followed by a third fall; and at length O'Connor persuaded his son to leave the field, and he was himself captured by the English. But shortly afterwards, probably on his formal submission to the lord-lieutenant, he was set at liberty.

In the following year the Irish of Ulster were defeated by the English with great loss. A fleet of Welsh pirates, at this time, infested the Irish coast, and suddenly appearing in the neighbourhood of Dublin, they had attacked and plundered some ships belonging to that city, and captured the archbishop. When this event was noised abroad, the fleet of Dublin was sent in pursuit of the pirates, but having followed them far to the north without overtaking them, they returned, and put into Ardglass. There they found the Savages and the English of that district in arms to resist an invasion of their lands by the Irish under O'Neill of Clannaboy, and they were just in time to contribute to a decisive victory, in which the Irish lost no less than five hundred and twenty of their fighting men, including several distinguished leaders.

The struggle for the chieftainship of Tirconnell had continued since the death of Naghtan O'Donnell, and Donnell O'Donnell was now installed in the lordship in opposition to Naghtan's son Roderick, or Rory. The latter was still however supported by many partizans, one of whom made a sudden attack on his rival's house, carried away Donnell O'Donnell, and sent him to be

imprisoned in the castle of Inch, on an island in Lough Swilly, in Donegal. When Roderic O'Donnell was informed of the capture of his opponent, he immediately collected his followers to seize upon the chieftainship, and, hearing that the O'Kanes and Mac Quillans had collected their septs and were hastening to Lough Swilly to deliver the fugitive, he marched thither also. The castle of Inch appears to have been attacked by both parties, each eager to obtain possession of Donnell O'Donnell, but the men of Roderic had the advantage, and were rapidly making their way into the tower in which he was confined, of which they had burnt the gate and door and set fire to the stairs. Donnell, in his prison, heard the approaches of his enemies, and felt assured that they would only enter to put him to death; he begged of his keeper to be released from his fetters, that he might die like a freeman, and the latter acceded to his request. Donnell then ascended to the battlements of the castle, to view the movements of the assailants below. Looking down he beheld his enemy Roderic, with eyes flashing with anger, watching till the fire should subside, in order that he might force his way into the tower to kill him. In his despair, Donnell tore a large stone from the battlements and hurled it down upon his foe, who, receiving it on the crest of his helmet, was crushed beneath it. His followers dragged the body away, and in the confusion caused by this event, the men of the O'Kanes and Mac Quillans fell upon them, drove them away, and rescued the prisoner. Donnell O'Donnell then took undisputed possession of the lordship of Tirconnell. Two years afterwards O'Neill of Tyrone took up the cause of the remaining sons of Naghtan O'Donnell, who had sought refuge in his territory, and proceeding with a great army, in search of Donnell O'Donnell, to the district of Inishowen, he encamped on the shores of an arm of Lough Swilly. Donnell, taken apparently by surprise, was hastening stealthily with a few attendants to throw himself into the castle which commanded the entrance into his territories on this side, when he was observed by his enemies, who immediately pursued with an overwhelming force, and overtaking and surrounding the fugitives, fell upon them without mercy, and slew Donnell O'Donnell, with several of his companions. Turlough O'Donnell, one of the sons of Naghtan O'Donnell, then assumed the lordship of Tirconnell.

This event occurred on the 18th of May, 1456. In the interval of these troubles in Tírconnell, similar feuds had been disturbing other septs, but with so much uniformity of character that they hardly deserve the recital, while events of much greater importance were taking place in England. The duke of York had taken courage, and had hastened from his retreat on the Welsh border, at the call of his partisans, to effect a revolution in the government of his country, and assume the direction of the state during the mental weakness which had rendered king Henry no longer a free agent. The battle of St. Albans in 1455 commenced the well-known wars of the rival Roses, by throwing the king entirely into the hands of the Yorkists, and the duke was acknowledged protector of the kingdom. The death of Fitz Eustace, his deputy in Ireland, gave him the opportunity of placing that country under a faithful adherent in the person of the earl of Kildare, who held several parliaments, the acts of which are of comparatively small historical importance, and whose only embarrassment arose from the opposition of some of the Butlers, who supported the interest of the house of Lancaster, and who joined with the native Irish in an insurrection against his authority. The defeat of the Yorkists at Ludlow in 1459 by the Lancastrians, again turned the political scale, and the Yorkist leaders were compelled to seek safety in flight. The duke of York, with his youngest son, made his escape through Wales to Ireland, and was received at Dublin with the strongest marks of sympathy and attachment. His "earls and homagers," as they are termed by a contemporary, attended with every mark of respect, when he re-assumed in person his office of lord-lieutenant, while the English parliament, under the influence of his enemies, was passing bills of attainder against himself and his family. Dublin and Calais, where the earl of Warwick had taken refuge, were the centres of the intrigues of the Yorkist leaders, who acted more openly, because they were now too publicly proscribed to gain by concealment. It was at the former place that the final arrangements were made for a new rising in England. The duke landed in England with many of his Irish adherents, in the summer of 1460, marched direct towards London, gained the important battle of Northampton, and entered the capital in triumph. He now laid aside his former scruples, caused his titles

to the crown to be rehearsed before the parliament, and his ambition seemed to be satisfied by its public acknowledgment, and by the arrangement that the throne of England should be secured to himself and his heirs after the death of king Henry, to the exclusion of the line of Lancaster.

When fortune again turned against the duke of York in the disastrous battle of Wakefield, so many of his Irish adherents were slain fighting under his banner, and so great was the consternation which the intelligence of that event caused in Ireland, that the native chroniclers set it down in their annals that the domination of the Saxons was "dissolved and spoiled," and the whole island seemed to have broken out into one general insurrection. Some of the Irish chiefs who had given the English most trouble in the earlier part of the reign were no longer alive, and among these was the O'Connor Faly (Calvagh More O'Connor), lord of Offaly, who died in 1458; but his son and successor, Con O'Connor Faly, proved equally hostile, and only a few months before the battle of Wakefield he had given the English a severe defeat. He was now joined by the Butlers, and they together ravaged Meath in every direction, till the English bought their peace by the payment of a tribute. The Mac Geoghegans, Mac Mahons, and other tribes, followed the example, and were bought off in the same manner; and even the O'Neills, although engaged in sanguinary contentions with their old rivals of Tírconnell, could find strength to exact a pension from the tributary English. Many of the English estates on the borders were seized by the Irish, after the expulsion of their occupants, and the humiliating "black rent" was levied with more rigour than ever.

In the struggle which convulsed England between the battle of Wakefield and the final triumph of the house of York in the establishment of Edward IV. on the throne, the English administration in Ireland was left to its own resources, with no check to misgovernment, and no assistance against the difficulties with which it had to contend, while its own subjects were becoming more and more divided by the two factions which were raging in the neighbouring island. After the death of the duke of York at Wakefield, the party, whichever it might be, that governed England for the moment, had no leisure to think of appointing a successor to the government of Ireland; and the Irish council showed its strong sympathies with the

house of York by electing the earl of Kildare for their lord-lieutenant. One of the first cares of Edward IV. after his accession, was to confirm their choice, and he only displaced this nobleman in order to show his attachment to Ireland by investing the government in his own brother, the duke of Clarence, who seemed to have a peculiar claim to the affections of his Irish subjects from the circumstance of his having been born in the castle of Dublin. Sir Rowland fitz Eustace, afterwards created lord Portlester, who had held the office of lord treasurer, was appointed to the office of lord deputy under the duke of Clarence, and other leading men in Ireland were rewarded for their devotion to the victorious house of York.

At the moment when the one faction, however, appeared to be crushed entirely in England, it suddenly raised its head in the neighbouring island. Among the victims of party who fell on the scaffold after the sanguinary battle of Towton, was the staunch Lancastrian nobleman, James earl of Ormond; and the Irish parliament exhibited its zeal by passing an act of attainder against his brother and heir, sir John Butler, and other members of his family, as well as against several other noblemen of Ireland who had distinguished themselves in the Lancastrian cause. Yet a great number of their English partizans, with sir John Butler, who assumed the title of earl of Ormond, fled to Ireland, and took refuge in the earl's possessions in Munster, where they raised the standard of rebellion against the Yorkish lord-lieutenant, and collected a formidable army. The Anglo-Irish government was relieved from much of its alarm by the zeal of the young and powerful earl of Desmond, who proved his devotion to the fortunes of the house of York by raising a powerful army, said to have amounted to twenty thousand men, to oppose the insurgents. At first, the earl of Desmond, although far superior in numbers, was not successful in his operations, and his brother Gerald was taken prisoner. The Butlers entered Leinster, committed great havoc, and obtained possession of Waterford, after which the war appears to have been carried into the territory of the Butlers in the modern county of Kilkenny. Here Mac Richard Butler, who had the command of the main body of Ormond's forces, rashly accepted the challenge of the earl of Desmond to decide the quarrel in a pitched battle. The Irish chroniclers tell us, that

he acted contrary to the advice of the earl of Ormond, and they add, as a reason for the earl's unwillingness to fight, that Englishmen were accustomed not to give battle on a Monday, or after noon on any other day, and that Mac Richard suffered for not respecting this superstitious observation. The battle took place at Pilltown, near Carrick-on-Suir, in the county of Kilkenny, and ended in the entire defeat of the Lancastrians, of whom a great number were slain, and Mac Richard Butler was himself taken prisoner.* The consequence of this victory was the capture of Kilkenny, and of the corporate towns of the country of the Butlers, by the Geraldines, who plundered and ravaged their lands. The earl of Ormond, with the remains of his forces, retired to a strong position where they could bid defiance to their assailants; and the sudden arrival of a strong body of English Lancastrians, under one of Ormond's brothers, who had captured four of the earl of Desmond's ships on their way, increased the strength of the insurgents, and raised their courage. The war between the two earls seems to have ended in a reconciliation, and the king subsequently confirmed sir John Butler in his title of earl of Ormond. In 1463, the earl of Desmond was appointed to succeed lord Portlester as lord deputy, in reward for his great services to the house of the reigning monarch.

The earl of Desmond now became proud and ostentatious, and he was vain of surrounding himself in Dublin with a train of Irish chieftains, who attended upon him less from any respect to the English government than from personal friendship, and the feelings of attachment generated by the practice of fostering and gossiped through several generations. While thus indulging in the pride of a great chieftain, Desmond often

* In the Bodleian library at Oxford (MS. Laud. No. 610), there is a fragment of a copy of the Psalter of Cashel, which, with another manuscript called the Book of Carrick, belonged to Mac Richard Butler, and was given as part of his ransom after the battle of Pilltown, or, as the place was called in Irish, Baile-an-phoill. Besides several entries relating to the Butlers, it contains a memorandum relating to this event, of which the following is a translation:—

“This was the Psalter of Mac Richard Butler until the defeat of Baile-an-phoill was given to the earl of Ormond and to Mac Richard by Thomas earl of Desmond, when this book, and the Book of Carrick were obtained as the redemption of Mac Richard; and it was this Mac Richard that had these books transcribed for himself, and they remained in his possession until Thomas earl of Desmond wrested them from him.”

forgot his place as deputy of Ireland, and he offended and estranged from him the hearts of those whom he ought to have conciliated. The enemies of his family took advantage of his failings, and were gradually undermining his influence. As far as we can trace the history of his government, he was not very successful in defending the English pale from the aggressions of the Irish septs. Among other troubles, a feud had broken out between the O'Melachlins of Meath and the English family of the Petits of Mullingar, arising, it is said, from an aggression committed by Petit, who in 1463 treacherously captured O'Melachlin's son and a number of his friends, while they were on a visit at Mullingar. O'Connor Faly, as the friend of the O'Melachlins, marched into Meath, and set the prisoners at liberty; and further hostilities were prevented by a general conciliation, which was perhaps rendered more easy by the circumstance that the Petits and O'Melachlins were related together by fostership. Next year, however, this feud broke out again, and appears to have led to great commotions in Meath during two years. In 1466, encouraged apparently by the impunity of the O'Melachlins, the O'Neills rose in arms and defeated the English in the plains of Orgial; and O'Brian of Thomond ravaged the county of Limerick. The earl of Desmond now took the field, and marched to the assistance of the Petits, but, unadvisedly, engaging the forces of O'Connor Faly, the English were defeated with great loss, and a considerable portion of the earl's army, with the earl himself, fell into the hands of the Irish. Desmond was delivered as a prisoner to the keeping of the brother of O'Connor Faly, who was his own foster-brother, and who conveyed him to Castle Carbury. By this disaster, the whole of Meath was exposed to the ravages of the Irish, who plundered it without opposition. At length the earl's keeper, who had treated his prisoner with the generosity of a foster-brother, set him at liberty without ransom, and delivered at the same time a number of his followers. But he found the English pale so harassed and weakened by repeated disasters, that he was obliged to purchase peace by treating with the Irish enemies.

The ill success of the earl's military government lent a new handle to his domestic enemies, among whom one of the bitterest was a prelate of the church, the bishop of Meath, who had been accused by Desmond of raising a riot against him in the neigh-

bourhood of Dublin, in which some of his followers were killed, and who retaliated by repairing to England to carry over complaints against the earl for abuse of power. The lord-lieutenant, however, was still supported by the strong Yorkist feelings of the Irish parliaments, of which he called one at Wexford in 1464. This parliament enacted a number of laws, some of which were marked by the party feelings of the day, while others were directed against real abuses, such as that for regulating fees in the courts, and another for suppressing clipt money. As the earl had declared his intention of repairing immediately to England to answer the charges made against him, the parliament empowered him to name a substitute during his absence, and they further showed their zeal to his person by ordering a citizen of Drogheda, who "had passed into England, and there of malice prepense had accused Thomas earl of Desmond, the king's deputy, of extorting coyne and livery from several inhabitants of Meath, and had been of counsel and support to several traitors and rebels, to the great slander and rebuke of the said deputy," to be imprisoned in the castle of Dublin. In addition to this act of tyranny, the parliament sent a strong remonstrance to the king in the earl's favour, setting forth his numerous services, and not forgetting his zeal against the Lancastrians.

This remonstrance had its full effect; for the earl was not only graciously received by the king, and his enemies discountenanced, but he was honourably restored to his government, and, on his return, the consciousness of his triumph made him prouder than ever, and led him to give his enemies new causes of complaint. He soon afterwards held another parliament at Trim, in which acts were passed that seemed to show a determination to assimilate the manners of the inhabitants of the pale to those of their brethren in England. Among other new regulations, it was enacted that the Irish residing among the English subjects should be obliged to assume the English garb and fashion of the hair, to be sworn liege men to the king within one year, and to take English surnames; that every inhabitant should practice with the long-bow (a formidable weapon in the hostilities with the Irish); that there should be a constable for every town, to see that butts should be erected; and that all males from the age of sixteen to sixty should be exercised in archery on every holiday. To prevent the Irish districts from receiving

assistance. or supplies by sea, which could only be done by suppressing their shipping, a law was passed forbidding any one to fish on the Irish coasts except by special licence from the king's deputy.

While thus in the plenitude of his power, and to all appearance secure in the king's favour, the proud earl of Desmond stood on the brink of a precipice from which he was speedily to be hurled to his destruction. The same event which drove away the king-maker Warwick from Edward's court, is said to have been the real origin of the disgrace which fell upon Desmond. He had expressed strong dissatisfaction at the king's marriage with the lady Elizabeth Grey, whom he was reported to have called in contempt "a tailor's widow." Perhaps he was suspected of being in communication with the party which, after that marriage, was formed against king Edward, and in which the lord-lieutenant (George duke of Clarence) took a principal part. In 1467, he was deprived of his office of lord deputy, which was given to a man of a very different character, John Tiptoft earl of Worcester.

It is recorded in Hollinshed as the tradition of the Anglo-Irish, that the earl of Worcester received from the queen secret instructions to watch the earl and "sift and examine his trade of life after the Irish manner, contrary to sundry old statutes enacted in that behalf;" and that the catastrophe which followed was the result of her intrigues. According to other statements, it was the continued representations of the earl's enemies, who described the dangerous character of his popularity amongst the Irish and of the alliances he was forming with them, and even accused him of a design to renounce his allegiance and proclaim himself king of Ireland, that first drew upon him the strong displeasure of the government. Be this as it may, in the first parliament of the new deputy, which was adjourned from Dublin to Drogheda, an act was passed attainting of high treason Thomas earl of Desmond, Thomas earl of Kildare, and Edward Plunkett, Esq., as well for alliances, fostering, and alterage with the king's Irish enemies, as for furnishing them with horses, harness, and arms, and supporting them against the king's subjects; and whoever had any of their goods and lands, and did not discover them to the deputy within fourteen days, was judged to be attainted of felony. The earl of Desmond, relying probably on his power and on his family connections, boldly

presented himself before the parliament to answer the charges brought against him; when, to the astonishment and confusion of his party, he was arrested and brought to the scaffold, on the 15th of February, 1468. The native chroniclers lament his death as that of "the most illustrious of his tribe in Ireland in his time for his comeliness and stature, for his hospitality and chivalry, his charity and humanity to the poor and the indigent, his bounteousness in bestowing jewels and riches on the laity, the clergy, and the poets, and his suppression of theft and immorality." Perhaps one of his greatest crimes in the eyes of those who brought him to the scaffold, was the favour he had shown to the native Irish.

The earl of Kildare, the chief of the other great branch of the family of the Geraldines, was also placed under arrest, but he was soon afterwards released, or he effected his escape, and he repaired to England, where he so effectually pleaded his cause before the king, that he not only obtained his pardon, followed by the reversal of the attainder by the same parliament which had condemned him, but in the same year he was appointed lord deputy of Ireland in the room of his persecutor, and Tiptoft earl of Worcester was recalled to England. During the brief restoration of Henry VI. in 1470, the earl of Worcester was seized by the new rulers, and executed as a traitor for his attachment to the house of York. The Irish rejoiced in the belief that it was in revenge for the death of their favourite earl that the earl of Warwick and the duke of Clarence "cut into quarters," to use their own expression, the man whom they only condescended to describe by the epithet of "the wreck of the maledictions of the men of Ireland." The Geraldines thus regained their position as the ruling family among the English of Ireland, and they continued to hold it for several years, until their power and pride again provoked the jealousy of the crown.

The parliament called by the earl of Worcester passed several acts which possessed at least the appearance of vigour. By one of these it was ordered that the "black rent" which had been so generally paid to the "Irish enemies and English rebels," should in future be paid to the king's deputy for the better support of his army; a regulation which would certainly have produced the greatest advantages to the English government, had it not been quite impossible at that moment to carry it into effect, and in fact it was

evidently intended as a mere reproach on the policy of the earl of Desmond, under whom this odious tax had become general. Another of these acts shows an intention on the part of the lord deputy to enforce the indentures of submission by the only weapon which was then in his power to use with effect, the excommunication of the church threatened in these indentures against the chiefs who broke their agreement, a sentence which the Irish bishops appear to have been backward in pronouncing. This act provides that, "whereas our holy father Adrian pope of Rome was possessed of all the lordship of Ireland, in right of his church, which for a certain rent he alienated to the king of England and his heirs for ever, by which grant the subjects of Ireland owe their obedience to the king of England as their sovereign lord, it is therefore ordained that all archbishops and bishops of Ireland shall upon the monition of forty days proceed to the excommunication of all disobedient subjects; and if such archbishop or bishop be remiss in executing these duties in the premises, they shall forfeit one hundred pounds." One of the laws passed in this parliament making the statute of the sixth of Richard II. against rapes (or, as we now say, abduction of females), of force in Ireland, is remarkable for its provision that "all statutes made in England be adopted and made current in this kingdom." The parliament called by the earl of Kildare was chiefly occupied in acts of revenge and retaliation against the enemies of the Geraldines who had been most active in the late measures to which that family had been made a victim.

The weakness of the English pale at this time is strikingly shown by the singularity of the measures adopted for its defence. It had been the policy of the government for some time to leave the population in its territory to its own protection, and to render that protection more efficient it had been long endeavouring to enforce among the English in Ireland the same regulations for the practice of the terrible long-bow which were observed in England. To ensure an abundant supply of these weapons, a parliament held at Naas in 1472, passed an act ordering that "every merchant should bring twenty shillings' worth of bows and arrows into Ireland, for every twenty pounds' worth of other goods he imported from England." All these precautions, however, seem to have been of little avail, and one of the acts of the earl of Kildare's government was the

establishment of a fraternity of arms, under the title of the "brothers of St. George." The first scheme of this fraternity was laid before a parliament called in 1473, and its object was then stated to be to resist and subdue the Irish enemies and English rebels. It was to consist of a hundred and sixty archers and twenty-four spearmen, who were to be retained for three months in the counties of Dublin, Meath, Kildare, and Orgial (Louth), and were to be commanded by lord Portlester and other officers; special arrangements were made for their hire and support. In a parliament held the following year, this sort of standing army received a more permanent form. It was to consist of thirteen persons of highest rank and most approved loyalty in the four counties above mentioned,* who were to assemble annually at Dublin on St. George's day, to give public expression of their zeal for the English government, from which circumstance they took the title of the "fraternity of St. George." Their captain was to be chosen every year on this anniversary, and he was assigned for his train a hundred and twenty archers on horseback and forty other horsemen, the latter with one attendant to each, the archers to be paid each sixpence a day, and the others fivepence for themselves and attendants, with an annual stipend of four marks. This money was to be raised by a duty of twelpence in the pound on all merchandize sold in Ireland, except hides and the goods of freemen of Dublin and Drogheda. These two hundred men and thirteen officers constituted the whole body of the regular soldiery then possessed by the English government in Ireland, and on them, with the irregular forces which could be levied in an emergency, the English pale depended for its defence, a striking proof how much more the native Irish attended to their mutual feuds, than of the common enemy, who at this time could have opposed a very ineffectual resistance against their united attack. This fraternity served also as a kind of standing police, for an especial authority was given to their captain to apprehend outlaws, rebels, and all who refused obedience to the laws.

* These were, in the first instance, the earl of Kildare, lord Portlester, and sir Rowland Eustace, for the county of Kildare; lord Howth, the mayor of Dublin, and sir Robert Dowdal, for that of Dublin; lord Gormanston, Edward and Alexander Plunkett, and Barnaby Barnwal, for the county of Meath; and the mayor of Drogheda, sir Laurence Taaf, and Richard Bellew, for the county of Orgial or Louth.

The family of the Geraldines was now destined to suffer a temporary eclipse by the sudden rising of the Butlers into royal favour. John Butler, the brother of the attainted earl of Ormond, had obtained the title after the battle of Tewkesbury, and he became so great a favourite with king Edward, that he was chosen to attend that monarch into France. Edward was accustomed to speak of him as the goodliest knight and finest gentleman in Christendom; and he asserted that if good breeding, generosity, and liberality were lost in the world, they might all be found in perfection in the earl of Ormond. In 1475, the earl of Kildare was removed from the office of lord deputy, and he had the mortification to be succeeded by the old and inveterate enemy of the Geraldines, William Sherwood, bishop of Meath. It was the parliament called by this deputy that reversed the attainders passed against the Butlers after the battle of Towton. The same parliament passed a singular and significant law, that any Englishman, injured by a native Irishman of an independent sept, might reprove himself on the whole sept and nation. It was a measure specially calculated to perpetuate the hostilities between the two races.

For two or three years after the dismissal of the Geraldines from the government, the English pale was disturbed by the factious rivalry between them and the Butlers, which rose so high, that, wearied with the complaints of both parties, king Edward at length sent his commission to the archbishop of Armagh, to inquire into the causes of their discord, and to act as umpire between them. We are not acquainted with the archbishop's proceedings, but the loss of the chiefs of each party seems to have appeased their animosity for a moment. Pious motives carried the earl of Ormond on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and he died in the Holy Land in 1478; and in the same year Thomas earl of Kildare died, and was succeeded by his son Gerald.

Family rivalry now merged into a struggle of political parties, and at last the Irish parliament resolved that the bishop of Meath should repair in person to the king, to acquaint him with the disorders of the Irish government and the dangers to be apprehended from them. The Geraldines sent representations in contradiction to those of the parliament, which led to a new contention, but which were so far successful, that in 1478 Gerald, the young earl

of Kildare, was appointed to the government of Ireland. The appointment was, however, suddenly cancelled, and the king made an attempt to throw both factions aside by appointing Henry lord Grey his lord deputy, and sending him over with a train of three hundred men-at-arms and a company of archers. But now the Anglo-Irish seem to have discovered that a great lord "of English birth" was not the man best fitted to govern them, and they showed every opposition in their power to the new deputy. It appears that lord Grey's commission and the letters dismissing the earl of Kildare from his office, were sealed with the king's private seal, and the earl objecting to this an informality, and, pretending to doubt their authority, refused to obey them, but continued to exercise his office, and called and prorogued his parliament; while lord Portlesler, the chancellor, carried away the great seal, and Keating, prior of Kilmainham, who was constable of the castle of Dublin, refused to deliver that fortress up to the new deputy.

The latter called a parliament which he proclaimed as the only real one, and which passed acts of its own, and annulled those of the rival assembly; he declared the great seal cancelled, and gave directions for a new one to be made; and he summoned the prior of Kilmainham, on his peril, to deliver up the castle. In the midst of these contentions, the office of lord-lieutenant became vacant by the death of the unfortunate duke of Clarence, and was conferred by the king on his infant son George. As soon as intelligence of this event reached Ireland, the lords in opposition held a meeting, to which they gave the title of the king's council, and in which they elected the earl of Kildare to the office of lord deputy; while lord Grey received a new commission to the office from the king. There were now two governments and two parliaments leagued against each other, and passing laws independent of each other. At length king Edward summoned the leading men of each party to appear before him in England; and there, after lord Grey, who seems to have been wearied of the factions against which he had to contend, had resigned his office, Gerald earl of Kildare was appointed lord deputy under Richard duke of York, who had been appointed lord-lieutenant on the death of his brother George. The revenue of Ireland was at this period so low, that it was expressly provided, that if the annual sum of six hun-

dred pounds, required for the maintenance of the deputy's small military establishment, consisting of eighty archers on horseback, and forty spearmen, should prove too onerous for the country, it should be supplied from England.

This appointment, with the moderation of the king in selecting from the acts of the two opposing parliaments those which promised to be most profitable and directing them to be confirmed by a new parliament, had the full effect of restoring tranquillity. The earl of Kildare's commission of office was fixed for four years, but he continued to rule Ireland during the two brief reigns which followed, and was confirmed in his office on the accession of Henry VII. His parliaments followed generally in the steps of their predecessors, and few of their acts have much importance in history. But it is remarkable that, at the same time that one of these parliaments enacted, that "the pale should hold no correspondence with the Irish," the earl of Kildare was marrying his sister to the head of the great northern sept of the O'Neills, upon which a special act was passed for naturalizing O'Neill, and giving him all the rights of an English subject. It was an effect of that fatal separation of character between the Geraldine, proud in his wealth and power, making his own alliances, and only obedient to the English government at his own pleasure, and the officer of the English crown, ruling the English pale according to principles which had there become permanent. As the king's deputy, he is represented as distinguishing himself by the vigour with which he repressed all predatory excursions into the English pale, whether by "Irish enemies" or degenerate "English rebels," and by his severity in punishing delinquents; while, as one of the most powerful chiefs without the pale, he is spoken of by the Irish annalists as taking part in the local quarrels of the natives, and often turning them to the advantage of himself or his kinsmen.

The latter continued to be, by their mutual animosities, the best safeguards to the English settlements in Ireland. The great and widely-extended family of the De Burghs, or, as we shall now have to call them, the Burkes, had become so entirely degenerate, that the name seldom occurs in the history of the English government. But they were actively engaged in the internal wars of Connaught, and had for many years been gradually breaking the power of the

O'Connors, the most powerful of whom was now the O'Connor Faly, the chieftain of Offaly. The Burkes themselves were divided into the two great branches of Clanrickard and of the north of Connaught. At the period of the execution of the earl of Desmond in 1468, the Burkes of the south, in conjunction with O'Connor Don, were brought into collision with O'Donnell and the forces of Tirconnell, in a dispute relating to the succession of the chieftainship of the O'Rourkes, and with the Mac Dermotts and some of the septs of the O'Connors, in consequence of the various feuds which broke out at once in different parts of Connaught. The deaths of various chiefs in other parts of the island, involved their septs in all the inconveniences of disputed successions. The English of the pale became involved in some of these disputes; they took O'Connor Faly prisoner, and destroyed the castle of the O'Reillys at Tullymongan, and the monastery of Cavan; but they experienced a severe defeat from the Irish of Ulster under Con O'Neill. The most important of the numerous feuds of this kind which marked the year 1469, was the renewal of the troubles in Connaught, where the Burkes of the north joined with the O'Donnells in making war upon the Burkes of Clanrickard and their usual allies the O'Briens of Munster. The latter were defeated in two pitched battles fought in the county of Clare, the second of which was remembered afterwards as an action of celebrity, under the title of "the defeat of Glanog," from the name of a small river near which it was fought.

Connaught was to a great degree pacified in 1470, but there was war among the O'Rourkes, between the O'Connors of Sligo and the O'Donnells, and among the Mac Donoughs, the Mac Geoghegans, the Maguires, and the O'Neills. The continuation of all these feuds during the year 1471, brought the English into Offaly and into the country of the Mac Mahons, and gave them uneasiness in other parts of the frontier. In the year following, the English of Westmeath were at war with the O'Kellys. Besides the petty contentions of the smaller septs, which were continued almost without interruption during several years, the year 1473 was marked by a "great war" between the Mac Rannalls and the Mac Shanlys in Leitrim, in the course of which several towns were burnt. The next year was distinguished similarly by a "great war" between O'Donnell of Tirconnell and O'Neill of

Tyrone. Another "great war" occurred in 1475 between the Mac Mahons, in which the English of Orgial were involved; and in the same year the numerous small feuds which troubled the western parts of the island led the powerful O'Donnell to make what the Irish chronicles call a "circuitous hosting," which will be best described in their words. Having formed a junction with Maguire, O'Rourke, and other chiefs of Lower Connaught, he marched first to Ballyconnell, in Cavan, to rescue Brian O'Reilly, who was O'Donnell's friend and confederate, and to make peace between O'Rourke and O'Reilly. O'Reilly came to Ballyconnell, and the forced reconciliation took place, hostages being given to O'Donnell for its observance. O'Donnell next proceeded to Fenagh-Moy-Rein, where Mac Rannall came and made his submission. He then pursued his course till he entered Annaly, where he went to assist the sons of Irial O'Farrell, who were at war with another branch of the O'Farrells for the chieftainship; O'Donnell spoiled and burnt all Annaly, except the part which belonged to the sons of Irial, whom he left "in power and might." He afterwards proceeded through Westmeath, where he burnt Castletown-Delvin, and ravaged the surrounding country. While he lay encamped in Meath, the English families of the Dillons and Daltons came and "made peace with him," that is, they paid him to spare their lands. He then marched into Offaly, to assist O'Connor Faly against the English, and remained for some time plundering and ravaging Meath on each side of him. He "demolished and burnt" Castle-Carbury and Ballymeyler, in Kildare, ravaged the territories of Tir-Briuin and Fertullach, and exacted a contribution from the town of Mullingar to spare it from pillage, after he had devastated the country around it. He then pursued his course into the district in the north of the modern King's County, to join in a feud which divided the sept of the O'Melachlins, and he there gained two battles, and burnt the two castles of Moy-hownagh and Moyelly belonging to that sept. From thence O'Donnell proceeded with his army to the Shannon; and some of the O'Kellys, who accompanied him on this expedition, having collected together all the vessels they found in the neighbourhood, he crossed that river into the territory of Hy-Many, "and there he remained until he had rested and recruited himself after his long expedition." He then proceeded in the

same hostile manner through Clanrickard (Clare), Conmaicne (Mayo), the Clan-Costello, and Lower Connaught, to his own country, "having received submission and gained victory and triumph in every place through which he passed."

This fierce inroad appears to have provoked no retaliation, even from the English, and the only enemies we find in the field against O'Donnell in 1476, were the Burkes. Mac William Burke, joined by the Mac Dermotts, raised an army to dispute the possession of Lower Connaught with the chief of Tirconnell, who was assisted by the Mac Donoughs; but they came to an arrangement without fighting, and agreed to divide the territory in dispute between them. At the same time the English of Meath became engaged in hostilities with the Irish of the county of Longford and with O'Connor Faly, which led to extensive devastations.

In 1477, Tirconnell was again weakened and exposed to the attacks of the O'Neills by domestic wars among the O'Donnells; and, in the south, a feud among the Mac Carthys led to a general commotion throughout Munster, in which the English and Irish of that province were equally involved. In the autumn of 1478, war again broke out between the Burkes of Sligo and O'Donnell, arising apparently from a feud among the Mac Dermotts; and there was a "great war" between the O'Connors in the plain of Connaught. The two following years were marked by a continuous and obstinate war between the chiefs of Tirconnell and Tyrone, in the course of which several distinguished members of both families, the O'Donnells and the O'Neills, were slain. It would appear that, in spite of these troubles, the O'Neills found leisure to provoke the English government, for in 1480, the earl of Kildare, then deputy, placed himself at the head of the English of Meath, and marched into Tyrone to support Con O'Neill, one of the contending parties. They attacked the castle of John Boy O'Neill, who defended it against them successfully, and the deputy returned without having made any impression on the Irish enemies. On the accession of a new king or chief among the Irish septs, it was the old custom to select, generally from another branch of the family, an heir apparent, or, as he was termed, a "roydamna," who was to be his successor. It was this custom which, by the rivalry it excited, and the factions which resulted from it, led to the domestic wars and seditions which fill

the pages of the Irish annalists. Con O'Neill was the roydamna or heir apparent of Tyrone; it was he who married the sister of the earl of Kildare, who was thus naturally led to espouse the cause of his brother-in-law in his war against his Irish kinsmen. This war was revived in 1481, when Con O'Neill fell into the hands of his enemies, and was delivered into the custody of the O'Donnells. He was ransomed from them in 1483, upon which his father resigned to him the chieftainship of Tyrone, probably as a precaution against the rivalry of the Clannaboy O'Neills; for he was no sooner inaugurated, than the latter, supported by O'Donnell, recommenced the war on a more extensive scale than before. O'Donnell assembled the whole force of Tirconnell and Lower Connaught, and joining with Hugh Oge Boy O'Neill, went direct to Dundalk, which they plundered, as well as the surrounding country. The earl of Kildare, with an English army, marched against the invaders, but was defeated with considerable loss; and O'Donnell then proceeded to Louth, which was only saved from destruction by the payment of tribute. When they left Louth, each party was probably anxious to secure his plunder, and Hugh Oge Boy O'Neill separated from O'Donnell, and marched home through the valley of the Newry river. O'Donnell went through the territory of Orgial, or Oriel, a great part of which was then subject to the O'Neills, plundering and burning the country, until he arrived at the Blackwater. There, the annalists tell us, his men "cut down and felled dense and impervious woods, which impeded their progress on the brink of that river, so that they formed a free and open passage for the army through these woods." The annalist who records this event appears to have fallen into some confusion in his

account of this part of O'Donnell's march through the country of his enemies, and he has probably omitted by accident what passed between the Blackwater and the Mourne, which the army of Tirconnell appears to have passed near Strabane. There, according to the annalist, "he ordered his troops to construct a strong wicker bridge across the river, which being done, his whole army, both infantry and cavalry, crossed the stream, without man or horse being drowned. They then let the bridge float down the stream, so that their enemies could only view them from the opposite side." Thus, after an expedition quite as formidable as that which he had carried into effect in 1475, the great O'Donnell returned to his own house, with "victory and triumph." Yet he hardly took time to repose himself, before he made "another hosting" against the Maguires, and carried off great booty from their territory.

The war between O'Neill and O'Donnell broke out again in 1484, and was followed by a sanguinary feud among the Maguires, of Fermanagh, arising from the murder of one of the chiefs of that sept by his kinsmen. In 1485, there was war in Connaught between the O'Connors and the Burkes of Clanrickard; between the O'Neills of Clannaboy and the English, in which the chief of the O'Neills was slain; between the O'Neills of Tyrone and O'Donnell, in which the latter had again the advantage, and carried off much plunder; among the O'Reillys of Cavan, in which the earl of Kildare interfered; between the Mac Mahons in Orgial, in which the English were also involved; between the family of O'Connor Faly; and between the Maguires of Fermanagh. Such was the state of Ireland when Henry VII. ascended the English throne.

CHAPTER XVII.

EARLIER PART OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VII.; THE CONSPIRACY TO RAISE LAMBERT SIMNEL TO THE THRONE.



IRM in their attachment to the house of York, the English subjects in Ireland received the tidings of the accession of a new dynasty with little joy, and many of them waited in sullen discontent ready to snatch at the slightest hope of restoring the fallen family to the throne. The singular moderation, whatever were its motives, which led the new king to leave the offices of state in Ireland in the hands of zealous chiefs of the Yorkist faction, while it apparently conciliated them for the moment, no doubt made them more presumptuous in their own force, and proved eventually the means of fostering rebellion. The only change of any importance made by king Henry on his accession, was the appointment of his uncle, Jasper earl of Pembroke, now created duke of Bedford, to the lieutenancy. Kildare was confirmed in the office of lord deputy; and not only were the other Yorkist officers left in their places, but the king forbore even to add any of the Lancastrian party to the council of state. The Lancastrians, however, were not neglected; and the family of the Butlers especially were taken into royal favour. Thomas Butler, who had been attainted with the rest of his brothers in the first year of the reign of Edward IV., was now restored to the estates of his family and to the title of earl of Ormond, and he was made one of the privy council of England.

The history of this period, and of the several plots to overthrow the throne of the Tudors, is involved in great obscurity, and we can only trace the course of events from the moment they become public. It is generally understood that most of these plots were hatched at the court of the duchess of Burgundy, the third sister of Edward IV., whose ruling passion was her hatred of the house which now held her brother's throne; but they were brought to maturity in Ireland, which was now the grand asylum of her party. One prince of

the house of York, Edward, son of the late duke of Clarence, who had been raised by his uncle, Edward IV., to the title of earl of Warwick, received more than ordinary sympathy from the Irish, because his father had been born in Dublin, and had been lord-lieutenant during several years. Richard III. had treated him at the beginning of his reign as the heir apparent to the English throne, but subsequently, from sentiments of jealousy, he had kept him a close prisoner in the castle of Sheriff-Hutton in Yorkshire; and Henry VII., finding the young prince in this position, instead of treating him with generosity, transferred him from Yorkshire to the Tower of London, where it was understood that he was subjected to great harshness. He was at this time about fifteen years of age. There was a strong feeling of sympathy throughout the kingdom for this young scion of a popular family; and his name, therefore, was the first selected for the purpose of trying the strength of Henry's throne.

He appears not to have been many months seated on it before his suspicions were awakened by the activity of the Yorkists in Ireland, and he despatched orders to the earl of Kildare to repair to him in England, under the pretext that he desired to consult with him on the state of the government committed to his charge. But the earl, probably conscious of the dangerous ground on which he stood, selected that moment for calling a parliament; and he prevailed on the principal lords, spiritual and temporal, to petition the king for at least a suspension of his mandate, on the plea that the presence of the deputy was absolutely necessary during the discussion of affairs for which the parliament was specially summoned. About the same time the activity of the conspirators was increased by the announcement of the birth of a son to the English monarch.

The immediate agent in getting up the plot which was at this moment in agitation, was an aspiring and turbulent ecclesiastic of the university of Oxford named Richard Simons, who had brought up a boy named Lambert Simnel, the son of an Oxford

tradesman, and an apt scholar in the path in which Simons directed him. It is said to have been proposed first that this youth should personify the younger of the two sons of Edward IV., and a story was manufactured that he had escaped from his uncle Richard, when his elder brother was murdered in the Tower. This plan, however, if really entertained, was immediately relinquished, as the name of the young earl of Warwick seemed more calculated to raise sympathy, and therefore promised a better chance of success, with the further advantage that, in case the Yorkist party were victorious, the true earl of Warwick might easily be brought forward to take the place of the false one.

Accordingly, early in 1486, a report was suddenly spread abroad that the earl of Warwick had escaped from the Tower; and within a few days afterwards Richard Simons landed in Dublin with his ward, whom he presented to the lord deputy and other lords of the council as the Yorkist prince. The youth himself, who was tall and handsome, acted his part to perfection, and gave such a clear and plausible account of his adventures, that he was readily believed by people who were already prejudiced in his favour. The earl of Kildare at once declared his conviction that the pretender was the real heir to the throne of England, and his example having drawn after him most of the lords and commons of the pale, they proceeded so far as to proclaim him by the title of Edward VI., king of England and France, and lord of Ireland.

When king Henry heard of the proceedings of the Yorkists in Ireland, he prepared deliberately to baffle their designs. One of his first steps was to take the real earl of Warwick from the Tower, and to convey him publicly through the city of London that the populace in England might be convinced of the imposture; and having shown him to those of the English nobles whose fidelity he suspected, and who were well acquainted with his person, he carried him in solemn procession to St. Paul's, attended by an immense concourse of people. The conspirators in Ireland were not disconcerted by the king's proceedings, but they retorted on him the charge of imposture, and declared that he had dressed up a boy in the garb of the young prince in order to deceive the people of England; and so entirely were the Irish in general convinced that this was the case, that the native annalists always

speak of Simnel as the true earl of Warwick. They sent their envoys to the court of Burgundy to seek assistance in their enterprise, and there they found the duchess prepared to give them a favourable reception; for no sooner had the report arrived in England that the Irish had proclaimed the pretender, than the earl of Lincoln, who was nephew of the duchess of Burgundy, and was then in attendance on king Henry, suddenly left the court and repaired to Burgundy, whither the staunch partizan of king Richard, lord Lovell, after an ineffectual attempt to raise an insurrection in England, had also taken refuge. Within a very short period the Irish Yorkists were encouraged by the arrival at Dublin of two thousand German troops under the command of Martin Schwartz, an experienced soldier, who was accompanied by lord Lovell and the earl of Lincoln.

The conspirators now acted with more boldness than ever. They took the young pretender on Whitsunday to the cathedral of Dublin, where, in presence of the lord deputy, the chancellor and treasurer, the lords Lincoln and Lovell, and many other nobles and chief men of the kingdom, his title to the crown was set forth in a sermon preached by John Payne bishop of Meath. When the sermon was concluded, the ceremony of coronation was performed with as much solemnity as the hurry and other circumstances of the occasion would allow, and it is said that the diadem placed on Simnel's head was borrowed from a statue of the Virgin, kept in St. Mary's church, near the gate commonly called Dane's gate. He was then carried in pomp from the cathedral to the castle, on the shoulders of a gigantic individual named Darcy,* the chief of an Anglo-Irish family in Meath. This part of the ceremony, indeed, is said to have been an imitation of the practices observed by the the Irish sept in the inauguration of their chieftains.

The pretender now issued his writs and called a parliament, which assembled at Dublin, enacted several laws, granted subsidies more willingly than usual, and denounced vengeance against all who disputed the title of "king Edward VI." Among the few who remained loyal to king Henry, were the Italian archbishop of Armagh, who refused to concur in the farcical coronation, and the citizens of Waterford, and the latter, by an

* He was popularly known by the name of Great Darcy of Platten.

act of Simnel's parliament, were declared to have forfeited their charter and franchises. Several of the Butlers were proceeded against as rebels, and attainted for their attachment to the Tudor dynasty, and they only saved themselves by flight; and the new government seemed firmly established in Ireland, where it appears to have been the wish of some of the Yorkist leaders to await the attack of their opponents.

But other counsels prevailed, and it was perhaps necessary, even for the brief success of the imposture, that the conspirators should move onwards. They were deceived into the belief that the people of England, and especially those of the north, were ripe for revolt, and that they had only to raise their standard on the opposite shores to overthrow at once the throne of Henry VII. The earl of Kildare and the other great chiefs raised a multitude of Irish and Anglo-Irish from their own territories and from the pale, which were joined with the more regular German troops of Martin Schwartz, and the whole was placed under the command of the earl of Lincoln. So great was the zeal shown on this occasion, and so sanguine were the hopes of success, that the lord deputy's brother, Thomas fitz Gerald, resigned his office of lord chancellor of Ireland to accompany the expedition. About the beginning of June, 1487, the army intended for the invasion of England embarked at Dublin, and having been carried quickly by a favourable wind to the southern extremity of Furness, they landed without opposition, and encamped at Swartmoor.

King Henry, meanwhile, had shown no want of his habitual prudence in preparing to meet this attack upon his throne. He raised an army far exceeding in numbers that of his enemies, and placed it under the command of the duke of Bedford and the earl of Oxford; and he not only committed to safe custody those of his more dangerous subjects in England whose fidelity he suspected, but he obtained the censure of the church against all those who were assisting in or countenancing the rebellion against his authority. He attempted further to turn to account the superstitious feelings of his subjects by performing a pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lady of Walsingham. And then, placing himself at the head of his army, he marched against the enemy, and established his head-quarters at Coventry.

The insurgents soon found themselves deceived in their expectations of assistance

from the commons of England. The only person of any note who joined them was lord Lovell's friend, sir Thomas Broughton, who came in to the camp at Swartmoor. They marched thence, in hopes of better success, into Yorkshire, but being again disappointed, they resolved, as the only chance left, to move southward to meet the royal army, and risk a battle, the event of which might encourage their English well-wishers to rise in their favour. The movements of the king's forces were as slow as those of the rebels were rapid, and they are said to have been so ill conducted, that the army lost its way between Nottingham and Newark, and was obliged to wait till guides could be procured. The rebels also were marching upon Newark, and they met the vanguard of the royal army, under command of the earl of Oxford, at the village of Stoke on the 6th of June. In spite of the great inequality of numbers, the battle was fought with the greatest obstinacy, and the disciplined valour of the German soldiers kept the fate of the day for sometime undecided. The Irish and Anglo-Irish, notwithstanding their want of discipline, and the comparatively inefficient character of their arms, acted with extraordinary bravery, and suffered themselves to be slaughtered in multitudes, without stirring from the spot on which they fought. It was this slaughter which at length discouraged the German auxiliaries, and decided the victory in favour of the royalists. All the chief leaders of the expedition, including the earl of Lincoln, the lords Thomas and Maurice fitz Gerald, sir Thomas Broughton, and Martin Schwartz, were slain in the battle. It was asserted that lord Lovell had been seen to escape from the field, and the mystery in which his fate was involved gave rise to a variety of legends; but as he was never heard of afterwards, he also was believed by many to have shared in the fate of his accomplices. The young pretender, and his teacher, Richard Simons, fell into the hands of the king, who committed the latter to close imprisonment, while he showed his contempt for Lambert Simnel by appointing him to a menial office in the royal kitchen, from which he was afterwards raised to the rank of a falconer.

In other respects the forbearance of king Henry towards the men who had so openly placed themselves in rebellion against his authority was no less remarkable. The papal bull of excommunication was indeed sent over to Ireland, and published against

the offending clergy; and a letter was sent by the king to the loyal citizens of Waterford, commending them for their loyalty, and holding forth as an object of their detestation the conduct of the citizens of Dublin and of "our rebel" the earl of Kildare; and the citizens of Waterford were authorized to seize upon the merchandize and ships of the rebels of Dublin, and appropriate them to the advantage of their own city. But various representations and expostulations, which reached the king's ears from Ireland, seem to have convinced him that his service would be benefited more by showing indulgence to the rebels of that country, than by acting with severity. The citizens of Dublin represented, with great humility, that they had been led into rebellion by the examples of their archbishop and of the lord deputy, and the earl of Kildare himself was too powerful a lord to be provoked with impunity, and he was looked upon as the only man able to keep Ireland in obedience. The king therefore determined not only to pardon him, but to retain him in his high office of chief governor.

But in order to give some show of ceremony and formality to his pardon, the king sent over, in 1488, the comptroller of his household, sir Richard Edgecomb, a gentleman in whom he placed great confidence, with a guard of five hundred men, to receive new oaths of allegiance from his Irish subjects.* When the king's commissioner arrived at Kinsale he professed an unwillingness to land, and Thomas lord Barry was

obliged to repair to him on board his ship, and there take the oath of allegiance and do homage for his barony. He was, however, prevailed upon next day by the earnest entreaties of James lord Courcy to enter the town, where he was received with every mark of reverential respect. Lord Courcy first did homage for his barony in the church of St. Melteoc, after which the townsmen took the oath of allegiance, and entered into recognizances for their fidelity. Sir Richard Edgecomb then returned to his ship, and set sail for the faithful city of Waterford.

It is probable that the extraordinary loyalty of this city had arisen in part from a bitter feud which had long existed between them and the earl of Kildare, and that personal feelings against him were among the motives which influenced their conduct. When they learnt that the king's commissioner brought with him a pardon for the earl, they became alarmed for their own interests, and, representing to him the extreme hatred which they said the earl of Kildare had always shown towards them, they begged sir Richard to be their suitor to the king, that in future they should be exempt from the jurisdiction of all Irish lords who might govern the land, but that they should hold immediately of the king and his heirs. Sir Richard, who had been brought on shore by the citizens, and introduced into their city with great pomp, and who was lodged in the mayor's house, returned them thanks in the king's name for their great courage and faithfulness,† and

* A minute account of this mission is preserved, and has been printed in Harris's "Hibernica."

† The following curious account of the behaviour of the citizens of Waterford on the coronation of the mock king, has been printed by Mr. Croker from a MS. in the State Paper Office, and affords a curious illustration of the history of these events:—

"Shortly after the said erle, as tutor and protector of the said kinge (Simnel), wrote to John Butler, maior of Waterford, and to all the citizens, a straight charge and severe comaund upon their duty of allegiance to be well prepared and with all redynes to receave their yonge kinge and lord, and, with all the forces they possible cold make, to assist him in his voiage unto his province of Mounster, where he and his counsaill were to take order in affaires of great importance touchinge his crowne and dignitie. The maior of Waterford, discretly takinge the gayne of some small tyme to confere with his bretherne, answered, 'I will send him answere by one of myne owne men;' and so sent him away.

"Within fewe dayes, with thadvise of his bretherne, he framed him an answere as followeth:— All loialty and subjection to our soveraigne lord, Henry the 7. kinge of England and lord of Ireland, and health to

your honorable person. With thadvise of my bretherne, havinge weyed in the ballance of loialty your imperiall and peremptorie commaund, with one consent, and beinge directed by them that are experienced, well seene in the lawes of both realmes, and are not to seeke much in roiall affaires concerning the tyme, this is that we have to say: that he, whosoever he be, takinge upon him the imperiall crowne or name to be kynge of England, and is crowned in Dublin by a subject, therle of Kyldare, and inhabitants of the cite of Dublin, havinge no right thereunto; the cite of Waterford accepteth and demeth such a one, and all such as imbrace and further such a coronation and proclamation made in Dublin, to be rude enemyes, traitors, and rebells, to the right prince and kinge of England.'

"Therle myghtly stormed at this answer, and in his rage comaunded the poore messenger presently to be hanged in Hoggin Greene, (now College Green, Dublin,) adjoyninge to the cite; wherewith Walter, archbishop of Dublin, then lord chaunceler of Ireland, and others of the counsaill, were not a little displeased. Immediatly the said erle sent an herald in his coate of armes to Waterford, whome John Butler, maior, espied beyond the river, and caused a boate to ferry him over to understand his pleasure. The herald

assured them of the king's especial favour towards themselves and their city. The people of Waterford now set no bounds to their exultation, and they even employed their city poet, whose name we find was James Rice, to celebrate their own loyalty and the disloyalty of Dublin in English "ballad royal," in the form of a letter addressed to the latter city, and which was in all probability recited before sir Richard Edgecomb. This dull but curious poem has been preserved in a manuscript in the State Paper office,* and furnishes us with a curious illustration of the party feelings in Ireland at this period. It opens with an address to the archbishop of Dublin, who had warmly espoused the cause of the boyish pretender, and who had thus set the example of rebellion to the citizens; and it then

beinge come to the key, offred to land; the maior commanded he shold not sett foote on shore, but deliver his message out of the boate, and that favor he wold shew him in regard of his coate, and for therle of Kyldares sake, who, contrary to the lawe of armes, had hanged his messenger.

"The harold, though at the first amazed, yet gathering breath, and fearing hard mesure because of the execution of the maiors messenger, drew his sword, commanded the mariners to putt of the shore, and, if they wold not be directed by him, he wold runne them through. All for that tyme beinge effected to his content, he turned him to the maior and citizens, and said, 'Therle of Kyldare, tutor and governor to the kinge, with the consent of his majestyes counsaill, straightly comaundeth the maior of the citie of Waterford, and the inhabitantes of the same, upon payne of hanginge at their dores, that they forthwith proclaime, or cause the kinge lately crowned at Dublin to be proclaymed, in their citie, kinge of England and lord of Ireland, and with all expedition to be in a redynes to goe with him into his province of Mounster upon speciall service.'

"Whereunto the maior, of himself (being a man of bold spirit and good corage) gave answer, 'Goe tell them that sent thee hither, that I will not suffer thy foote to come ashore, that I will not yeld unto their directions, and that I will save them a great labor—that they shall not needs to come to our doores; for I (by the grace of God), with the citizens of Waterford, and ayde of our neighbors, faithfull subjects to the crowne and dignitie of England, and the true and lawfull kinge of the same, beinge lord of Ireland, will meet them xxx myles of, and answer them with the sword of true loialty and subjection: and thou, herald, get out of our sight.' Forthwith the maior and his bretherne sent messengers to all the Butlers and Brenys, and the townes of Carrek, Clonemell, Callan, Kilkenny, Fithert, Gawran, Bala mac kanden, Rosse in Wexford, that they and their followers wold receave entertaynement of the citie of Waterford in defence of the most noble prince Henry 7., the true kinge of England and lord of Ireland, against a counterfeit kinge and his adherents lately crowned at Dublin. The Butlers, with their followers, returned answer that they, at a day and place appointed, with sufficient armes, colors displaid, and at their owne

proceeds to compare the behaviour of the latter with the noble conduct of their progenitors, and laments the hostility which had arisen from this rebellion between the two cities of Dublin and Waterford.† The worthy citizens of the latter place next set forth gravely the right of king Henry to the crown, tracing his descent at length from the ancient monarchs of England; and the Yorkist prejudices even of the loyal city of Waterford are evinced in the eagerness with which they seize upon the marriage of king Henry with Elizabeth of York, as constituting his strongest claim to the allegiance of his subjects.‡ They appeal to the papal bull as a further proof of the wickedness of the rebellion, and sneer at the ridiculous character of the person whom the rebels had chosen for their king;§ "where," say they, "was

charges, with the adventure of their lives, wold meete them with v hundred horse and a thousand foote, and further, if need required. The Brenys offred all kyndnes, together with the townes heretofore mentioned."

* It has been printed by Mr. Croker, in his "Popular Songs of Ireland," under the title of "the Mayor of Waterford's Letter."

† "O Dublin! Dublin! where be the jurors,
Thy noble men of aureat glorie?
They be all passed by processe of yeeres;
So is their renowne, worship, and victorie.
Alas! therefore, thow maist be right sorie,
For thou hast made a plaine degression
From thy true leageance unto rebellion.

The old amitie betwixt thee and us
Is now late broken of thy parte onely;
Our men by thee were taken right merveilous,
Their goods spoiled without remedie:
And albeit so, wee were not guiltie
Of anie thing contrarie to good intent,
Thou hadst our good without anie judgment."

‡ "Which title is fallen to our soveraigne ladie,
Queene Elizabeth, his eldest daughter liniall;
To her is com all the whole monarchie,
For the fourth Edward had no issue male.
The crowne, therefore, and scepter imperiall,
Both she must have without division,
For of a monarchie be no particion.

It is so that by divine purveyaunce,
King Henry the VIIth, our soveraigne lord,
And queene Elizabeth, to Godis pleasure,
Ben married both by amiable accord. [word?
Why should we speake more of this matter a
He is our true king without variance,
And to him by right we should owe our leageaunce."

§ "What is he that have read in cronicle,
In old stories, or in anie writing,
Or in the volume of the Holie Bible,
So rude a matter and so strange a thinge,
As a boy in Dublin to be made a kinge;
And to receave therein his unction,
The solemne act of his coronation?"

the prudence of your wise citizens, in choosing a boy, the son of an organ maker, to be made a king to rule England, to whom you still profess obedience, although he has been safely deposited in the Tower of London, to be exhibited in the menagerie as a new and strange animal—the first crowned king of Dublin!”* The citizens conclude by exhorting the people of Dublin to return to their allegiance, and thus merit pardon while it is not too late to hope for it.

To this latter city sir Richard Edgecomb proceeded direct from Waterford, and he arrived there on the 5th of July. The mayor and citizens awaited him, as suppliants, and received him at the gate of the house of the friars preachers, where he took up his residence during his stay at Dublin. But the proud lord deputy, the earl of Kildare, exhibited little humility. Instead of waiting in Dublin to receive the commissioner, he had set out on a pilgrimage to one of the Irish shrines, and it was seven days after sir Richard's arrival before he condescended to make his appearance. The earl then announced his readiness to receive the king's commissioner, and appointed as the place of meeting the abbey of St. Thomas, in the west suburbs of the city, where he was accompanied by some of the most active agents in the late conspiracy. The interview took place in the great chamber, where sir Richard delivered the king's letters to the earl, and accompanied them with a short address, which was expressed “with some show of bitterness.” The earl replied with proud coldness, discussed the subject of sir Richard's commission, and then broke up the meeting without giving any satisfactory answer, and returned to his castle at Maynooth. However, after various consultations in Dublin and at Maynooth, the commissioner agreed to the earl's terms of submission, and the latter did homage in the great chamber of St. Thomas's abbey, and afterwards, having been absolved from the sentence of excommunication, he took the oath of allegiance on the host before the high altar, sir Richard having, as a precaution against evasion, insisted that the host should be consecrated by his own chaplain. The

commissioner then placed round the earl's neck a chain of gold, which the king had sent him as a token of his favour. The earl's example was followed at the same time by the lords Portlester, Gormanstown, Slane, Howth, Trimleston, and Dunsany, and by the archbishop of Dublin, and the bishops of Meath and Kildare, with other ecclesiastics. After this ceremony had been gone through, the earl and the commissioner, attended by all the bishops and lords, went into the church of the monastery, in the choir of which *Te Deum* was solemnly chanted, the archbishop beginning it, and during this ceremony all the bells of the church rung. After the ceremony was ended, the commissioner entertained the earl and other lords at a great feast in the abbey of the friars preachers. Before the commissioner left the city, the citizens of Dublin, Drogheda, and Trim, and the archbishop of Armagh and some other of the clergy, received their pardons, and took the oath of allegiance. Two exceptions only were made to the general amnesty. One of these was Keating prior of Kilmainham, an ecclesiastic whose name had become almost proverbial for rapacity and violence, who was deprived of his dignities and offices, and ended his life in poverty and contempt. The other was Thomas Plunkett, chief justice of the Common Pleas, who had been one of the most prominent and mischievous actors in the late plot. This man was afterwards, at the intercession of some of the chief of the Irish nobility, pardoned.

On the 30th of July, 1488, sir Richard Edgecomb left Dublin, escorted by the archbishop, the chief justice and the recorder of Dublin, and proceeded to Dalkey. He remained there more than a week, before the weather would allow him to put to sea, and then he sailed over to Fowey in Wales.

This mission did little towards appeasing the factious spirit which had now so long disturbed the English pale. The presumption of those who had taken part in the rebellion was increased by the ease with which they had obtained their pardon, and by their consciousness of their own power in Ireland; while those who had remained

* “O God! where was the prudence of reason
Of you that have your whole common assent,
That a boy, an organ-makeris sonne,
Should be made a king of England, and regent,
To whom as yett all ye ben obedient?
To your dishonour and evill fame,
An horrible slaunder and great shame.

It is a great pitie that ye be deceived
By a false priest, that this matter began;
And that ye his child as a prince received,
A boy, a ladd, an organ-makeris sonn,
Which is now kept in the Tower of London;
His keepers there to all men declaring,
‘This is of Dublin the first crowned king.’”

faithful to the king, and who were actuated in many cases by strong feelings of animosity against the other party, were dissatisfied at the favour shown to rebels, and mortified that they were not themselves placed in office. The latter wearied the king with their petitions for preferment, and with their complaints against the Geraldines and their adherents; and the Italian archbishop of Armagh, who was especially hostile to the earl of Kildare, pressed for his own appointment to the lord chancellorship, that he might serve as a balance against his influence. The other party were equally active, and the earl of Kildare sent over to plead his cause before the king, his active partizan the bishop of Meath, the same who had preached up the title of Lambert Simnel in the cathedral of Dublin. At length, in 1489, wearied with these clamours, and not without his suspicions of the disaffection of a large portion of his Irish subjects, the king summoned the great lords of the pale to repair to his court in England; and the earl of Kildare, with the viscounts Buttevant and Fermoy, and the lords of Athenry, Kinsale, Gormanstown, Delvin, Howth, Slane, Killeen, Trimleston, and Dunsany, were received with favour at Greenwich. Still he expostulated gently with them on the facility with which they allowed themselves to be drawn into rebellion by worthless pretenders, observing, in reference to the infatuation which had been displayed in the affair of Lambert Simnel, that if they did not see their king sometimes, they would at length, he thought, place a crown on the head of an ape. He then confirmed to them his full pardon; they accompanied him in a solemn procession to the church; and he invited them to a splendid banquet. On the latter occasion, Simnel, to whom most of these lords had bowed the knee at Dublin, was brought from the kitchen to the hall to wait upon them at table. They were at last dismissed with every mark of favour and confidence, and on their departure, the baron of Howth, who had not joined in the rebellion, received as a special mark of the king's grace a gift of three hundred pieces of gold.

While faction thus divided the English of the pale, the disorders among the native septa were gaining ground rather than subsiding, and the English borders were continually exposed to outrages which were overlooked by the government in its eagerness to pursue its own feuds. During the

year in which the Simnel plot was first made public, the possessions of the English in the plain of Orgial were repeatedly plundered by the Mac Mahons and the O'Neills. In the south, a feud with the Mac Carthys of Desmond ended in the slaughter, on Christmas day, of one of the Barrys, whom the Irish writers describe as "the choicest of the English youths of Ireland." Sanguinary contentions took place during the same year (1486) among the Mac Rannalls in Leitrim, the Mac Donoughs in Sligo, the O'Farrells in Annaly, the Maguires in Fermanagh, and other septa in different parts of Ireland.* But the most powerful and warlike of the Irish chiefs at this time was O'Donnell of Tirconnell, who was engaged in perpetual feuds with his neighbours on every side. Hitherto, his great rival had been O'Neill of Tyrone, but in the year of which we are speaking, his interference in the affairs of Connaught and Sligo had brought him into violent contention with the great Anglo-Irish sept of the Burkes. Early in the year, O'Donnell marched with a numerous army into Connaught, to force the O'Connors to abide by his decision in some of their private quarrels, on which Ulic Burke, or, as he was more popularly called, Mac William of Clanrickard, marched to oppose him, but instead of fighting they agreed to a peace which was known among the Irish as "the peace of Siol-Murray." Soon after this peace with the Burkes of the south, O'Donnell marched another army into Mayo, and fought a battle against the Burkes of the north, in the barony of Tyrawley, in which the latter were defeated with considerable loss. In the year following, a feud among the O'Rourkes drew O'Donnell into Breffny, where he besieged and took O'Rourke's town at Castlecar in the north-west of Leitrim. It is incidentally stated that one of the O'Rourkes was killed on this occasion by "the shot of a ball," which is the earliest mention of the use of guns in Ireland yet known. O'Donnell demolished the castle, and he compelled O'Rourke to seek shelter in Fermanagh, but he was soon afterwards permitted to return, and O'Donnell "made peace among the men of Breffny, and compelled the country to rebuild the

* The Irish chroniclers turn from these scenes of violence and bloodshed to inform us, that this year died "Neidhe O'Mulconry, head of the *inhospitality* of Ireland: it was he who solemnly swore that he would never give butter and bread together to guests." — *Annals of the Four Masters*.

castle." No sooner, however, was the castle rebuilt, than O'Donnell was obliged to return into Breffny to protect O'Rourke against his own tribe, and he had to besiege Castlecar a second time, when, perhaps from the circumstance of its having been built more strongly, he had some difficulty in taking it. O'Donnell again, after his manner, "reconciled the men of Breffny with one another," and on this occasion he made them agree to pay a tribute to himself and his successors for their "protection." The northern chieftain next invaded Moylurg, the territory of the Mac Dermotts, where he committed great havoc before he returned to Tirconnell. Mac William Burke of Clanrickard about the same time seized upon a feud among the O'Connors as a pretence for invading the district of Hy-Many, where he destroyed the castle of Athleague, and plundered and burnt several towns and villages. This war ended in the ratification of the peace of Siol-Murray of the former year; after which, in the autumn, Hugh O'Donnell invaded Moylurg a second time. The numerous petty wars in which the Irish tribes were at the same time engaged in other parts of the island, need only be alluded to as showing how the natives were occupied when they might have taken advantage of the factious divisions among the English of the pale to drive them out of the island.

But the event which caused the greatest sensation in Ireland during this year, 1487, was the murder of James earl of Desmond by one of his own servants in his house at Rathkeale in Limerick. The Desmond branch of the Geraldines had become, if possible, more Irish than the branch of Kildare, and for some time they had taken little share in the affairs of the English pale. Earl James had set the English laws at defiance in contracting a marriage with the daughter of O'Brien, the chieftain of Thomond. He was murdered at the instigation, it was said, of his own brother, and his son Maurice, who immediately assumed the title, occupied himself diligently in pursuing the murderers after the Irish fashion, without condescending to call in the countenance or assistance of the English laws.

The most prominent of the numerous feuds among the Irish septa which distinguished the year 1488, was again the renewed, or rather continued, rivalry between O'Donnell and the Burkes of Clanrickard, which seems now to have been excited by the accession of a new chieftain of the O'Connors to be

the O'Connor Roe. O'Connor appears to have been in alliance with the Burkes, perhaps under their protection, while the Mac Dermotts, who had always exercised great influence in the affairs of Connaught, were now protected by the chieftain of Tirconnell. It is stated to have been by the intervention of O'Connor and Mac Dermot that the Burke and the O'Donnell were on this occasion reconciled. O'Donnell then accompanied Mac Dermot into the territory of the latter, to recover for him his strong fortress on the rock of Lough Key, which was held against him by a rival chief of his tribe. But the two chiefs were baffled in their attempt to capture this stronghold, and it was only after O'Donnell's departure that it was delivered up by an act of treachery. About the same time the turbulence of the Mac Geoghegans compelled the English lord deputy, the earl of Kildare, to march an army into Westmeath, where he took and destroyed their castle of Beleragh, and plundered and ravaged nearly the whole territory of Moy-Cashel, which belonged to that sept. The Irish chronicles inform us that the earl employed cannon in the siege of the castle of the Mac Geoghegans.*

The year 1489 was chiefly distinguished by great commotions among the O'Connors throughout Connaught, nearly the whole of which province suffered by the ravages of war. In Munster, the young earl of Desmond, by his exploits against his Irish neighbours, was rapidly meriting the appellation they bestowed upon him of "the warlike." In an engagement with the O'Carrolls of Ely, he slew their chief Murrrough, and took his brother Mulmurry prisoner. And in an invasion of the territory of the Mac Carthys, the earl slew in battle the Irish chief of Desmond. The turbulence of the O'Farrells of Annaly obliged the earl of Kildare to march against them with the English of the pale, and he divided the territory between the two Irish chiefs who were disputing for the whole; but he had scarcely left them to themselves, when they recommenced hostilities against each other.†

* See the "Annals of the Four Masters," and O'Donovan's note. This is the first mention of ordnance in the Irish annals; the weapon with which O'Rourke was killed, in 1487 (see above), was doubtless a hand-gun.

† The "Annals of the Four Masters" close this year with the information that, "the sheep of that part of Meath, from Dublin to Drogheda, ran, in despite of their shepherds, into the sea, and did not come back."

Early in the autumn O'Donnell had commenced hostilities in the north by invading the territory of the Mac Quillans, and after gathering a great booty, he went to Belfast, which he captured, and demolished its castle. His attention was, however, chiefly occupied with the affairs of Connaught; and it was not till the year following, that the old rivalries between Tirconnell and Tyrone broke out in new hostilities. According to the common account, this war arose from a demand of tribute by O'Neill; but it is hardly likely that such a demand should have been made on a chieftain so powerful as O'Donnell was at this time, and it is much more probable that some aggression on the part of the latter had provoked the hostility of the O'Neills. The chieftain of Tirconnell was indeed at war with several of his neighbours during the year 1490.* Each appears to have been apprehensive of the strength of his antagonist, for we are informed by the Irish annalists that the two chiefs remained from the 1st of November till Christmas, watching each other from their two encampments, O'Donnell at Drumbo, in the county of Donegal, and O'Neill a few miles off at Carrigins, about three miles to the south of Londonderry, "during which time they concluded neither peace nor armistice, and came to neither battle nor contest." We are not informed of the subsequent movements of the two great Ulster chieftains; but the Irish chroniclers at the beginning of the next year describe it as a "great war," perhaps more with reference to the power of the two chieftains engaged in it than to the actual hostilities committed. They were evidently willing to be reconciled, for early in 1491 the two chiefs repaired to the English lord-deputy, to lay their mutual grievances before him, but they returned "without peace or armistice," and the quarrel was embittered by the conduct of their followers during their absence, for one of the O'Donnells had fallen by the hand of Henry O'Neill, the chieftain left in command of the army of Tyrone. It was not till 1492 that a temporary cessation of arms was agreed upon between them; and in the January of the year following, Con O'Neill

was murdered by his own brother, Henry Oge O'Neill.

During the period of this great quarrel, the lesser disputes among the Irish seem to have been multiplying throughout the island. The year 1490 was one of the most turbulent that had been witnessed during several generations. The O'Connors and Mac Dermots, fought with great fury in Roscommon in a battle in which, to use the words of the annalists, "they remembered their old and recent enmities towards one another, for there were persons arrayed against each other who had slain each other's fathers and kinsmen." The troubles of Connaught were somewhat pacified in the spring of this year by the death of one of the most warlike of its chiefs, Felim Finn O'Connor, "who had spread the terror of his name through every territory around him, and who, the Siol-Murray expected, would one day unite Connaught," and restore the glory of the ancient O'Connors. There was war at the same time in the different septs of the Maguires, the O'Reillys, the Mac Mahons, the Mac Quillans in the north, the O'Neills of Clannaboy, the O'Beirnes, the O'Farrells, the O'Melaghlin, the O'Hanleys, the O'Kellys, the Mac Rannalls, and other Irish tribes, as well as among some of the septs of the degenerate English, such as the Burkes and the Dillons.

The feud among the O'Reillys was only appeased by the interference of the earl of Kildare, and the annalist informs us that "much damage was done by the English army;" but hostilities soon recommenced, and were continued during some months. The English became continually more and more involved in these disputes among the natives; and early in 1492, the Butlers having attacked, apparently without provocation, the O'Connors of Offaly, the earl of Kildare took part with the O'Connors, and committed to prison the Butler who had begun the quarrel.

This was probably but a partial outbreak of the old rivalry between the Butlers and the Geraldines, which had ranged those two families on opposite sides in the wars of the Roses, and which still existed with little diminution. This rivalry was now on the point of breaking out with more fury than ever. The English king, involved in hostilities with France, and apprehensive of new troubles in Ireland, suddenly determined to repress the power of the Geraldines, and to raise up the Butlers, of whose fidelity he had had such long experience. The earl of

* According to the account usually given by the Irish historians, the struggle between O'Donnell and O'Neill began by a singularly laconic correspondence, O'Neill having written to his rival the simple words, "Send me tribute, or else —," to which O'Donnell is said to have replied with equal brevity, "I owe you no tribute, and if —."

Kildare was removed from the office of lord deputy, which was given to the archbishop of Dublin; Plunkett was raised from the office of chief justice to that of lord chancellor; and lord Portlester was deprived of his office of treasurer, which was given to sir James Ormond (a natural son of the earl of Ormond, who had died in pilgrimage), who now repaired to Ireland to assume the chieftainship of the Butlers, in the absence of the earl of Ormond, who was employed on the king's business in France. The Irish annalists, who were ill-informed in matters relating to the internal affairs of the English pale, and who probably took their impressions from the statements published by the party which was most Irish (that of the Geraldines), pretend that the earl of Kildare resigned his office in disgust at the favour suddenly shown to the Butlers. The animosities between the two families was so great that they flew to arms without any regard to the authority of the English government, of which one was at present, and the other had but just ceased to be, chief officer; and not only the territories without the pale, but the English pale itself, was ravaged by their hostilities. The O'Briens and the Burkes appear to have taken part with the Butlers; and the flames of civil war appear to have been carried even into the city of Dublin, where the street of the sheep (now Ship-street), is stated in the Irish accounts to have been burnt by the earl of Kildare. All accounts agree that the dismissal of the earl of Kildare was the signal for a general attack on the English borders by the native Irish, who were either encouraged by the belief that the English pale was deprived of its main defence on the departure of the earl, or were incited by his emissaries in order that the English might be convinced of his importance. The war between the Butlers and the Geraldines raged through this year (1492) and part of the year following, and the former faction were so far successful

that we learn from the Irish chronicles that in the latter year the county and town of Kildare were plundered and burnt by the army of sir James Butler, the lord deputy.

The Irish, however, were again hindered from pursuing their hostilities against the English with any effect, by their quarrels among themselves. After the murder of Con O'Neill, at the beginning of 1493, the war between Tirconnell and Tyrone broke out with increased animosity. It was embittered by a dispute among the O'Neills for the succession to the chieftainship; and one of the pretenders, joining with him the Mac Mahons and numerous other septs, made head against the forces of O'Donnell, who brought with him to the invasion of Tyrone the O'Connors of Connaught and the O'Rourkes of Breffny. One of the greatest battles that had occurred among the native Irish for many years was fought in the mountains of Down, and ended in a decisive victory gained by O'Donnell, which appears to have put an end to the war.* The turbulent example of these great chiefs was imitated on a smaller scale in different parts of the island during this and the following year, and the English of the pale were thus left at liberty to engage in new treasons against the king of England.

* The "Annals of Ulster" give an account of a nocturnal attack made, in the course of this war, by Henry, the son of Melaghlin, son of Murtough O'Neill, on another Henry, son of Brian, son of Owen O'Neill, belonging to a rival branch of the sept, which will afford a notion of the way in which these hostilities were often carried on. The latter was confined with a broken leg, which he had perhaps received in some petty engagement; and the former, aware of this circumstance, went by night, broke into his house, killed his wife, and then proceeded to the place where he lay crippled, with the intention of slaying him. When the lamed man perceived his design, remembering his own nobility and valour, he sprang, upon his sound leg, to the staff on which he used to rest while confined with his broken limb, and taking his short knife into his hand, he plunged it into the belly of his aggressor, and wounded him mortally, but he received a mortal wound in return. Both Henry O'Neills thus died on the spot by each other's hands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PERKIN WARBECK; CONTINUED STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE GERALDINES AND BUTLERS, AND TRIUMPH OF THE FORMER.



HENRY'S suspicions of the fidelity of the Geraldines were evidently not destitute of good grounds, for we now find them involved in a new conspiracy against his throne. In the autumn of 1491, just after the English monarch had declared war against France, a new pretender, who is popularly known by the name of Perkin Warbeck, landed at Cork, and announced himself as Richard duke of York, the younger of the two sons of Edward IV., asserting that he had made his escape on the murder of his brother by his uncle Richard III. A merchant of that city named John Water, who had recently held the office of mayor, took up his cause with great zeal, and succeeded in enlisting the citizens in his favour.

The history of the earlier period of the life of this impostor is still involved in some obscurity, but there seems to be little reason for doubting that he was the son of a boatman of Tournay in Flanders; he is said to have borne a rather striking resemblance to the family of Edward IV., and to have shown an aptness for intrigue which fitted him to be the tool of a conspiracy said to have been, like the former, contrived at the court of the duchess of Burgundy. The moment of his appearance was not unfavourable for the design; he had been sent from Flanders to Portugal, whence he proceeded to Ireland, and the fact of his choosing Cork for his place of landing would lead us more readily to believe that he was in secret correspondence with the Geraldines. In a letter written by the impostor to the queen of Spain, subsequent to the period of which we are now speaking, he declares that he was on this occasion received with favour by the two earls of Desmond and Kildare. His further proceedings in Ireland at this time were cut short by the unexpected arrival of messengers from the king of France, who, hearing of the success of the plot in Ireland, imagined that the young pretender to the crown of England might be a useful

instrument in his negotiations with king Henry, and invited him to his court, where he promised him his protection and assistance. Perkin, by the advice of his friends, accepted the proffered friendship; he was received in France with great pomp and ceremony, had a guard of honour assigned to him, like a sovereign prince, and was lodged in splendid apartments. As the French king expected, Henry was alarmed at the countenance thus given to a pretender to his throne, and hastened to conclude a peace, in which he consented to terms more favourable to France than could otherwise have been obtained, on condition that all encouragement should be withdrawn from the young pretender. The latter made his escape to Flanders, and presented himself at the court of Margaret of Burgundy, who received him with great favour, declared her conviction that he was the person he pretended to be, and obtained for him the protection of the archduke Philip and Maximilian king of the Romans. While residing at Dendermonde under their protection, on the 25th of August, 1493, he wrote the letter to the queen of Spain already alluded to. It appears, however, to have had no favourable result, and after waiting in vain for assistance from any of the powers who had given him reason to expect it, we find him reduced to the alternative of practising with Italian astrologers and sorcerers to take away the life of king Henry by their unholy arts.

The latter, meanwhile, was active in endeavouring to destroy the belief among the princes with whom he was in communication that his own subjects were disaffected, or in any degree inclined to favour the designs of the pretender, or that his affairs in Ireland were in a state of embarrassment. Early in August, 1494, the Richmond or Clarenceux king-at-arms, was sent by the English monarch on an embassy to the court of France, and his instructions, still preserved, contained several articles relating to the designs of Perkin Warbeck, and to the condition of his own subjects in England and Ireland. With regard to the latter country,

the ambassador was directed to inform the king of France that the English monarch had determined to "set his country of Ireland in order,"* especially, it is added, among those who were called wild Irish, that they might thenceforth live under the same law as the English and as the other Irish who had conformed to the English language; and, with this object, he was to state that he was sending a good and sufficient army, accompanied with men distinguished both in the military and legal capacities. The king further states that he had been urged to this measure by some of the principal persons, lay and ecclesiastic, of his realm of Ireland, and especially by the archbishop of Dublin, three or four other bishops, the earl of Kildare, and other lords, who had come over to England to consult with him on the subject; and that the army would be ready to pass into Ireland without fault in the month of September. In accordance with this statement, sir Edward Poynings, a knight in whom the king placed the greatest confidence, was appointed lord deputy of Ireland on the 13th of September, 1494, and shortly afterwards he proceeded to his post, accompanied with several eminent English lawyers to form his council, and at the head of an army of about a thousand English soldiers.†

At the time when sir Edward Poynings was sent into Ireland, the office of lord deputy had been twice changed since it was held by the earl of Kildare. The archbishop of Dublin, who succeeded that earl, had called a parliament, which distinguished itself chiefly by its hostility to the Geraldines, for parliaments in Ireland had now become too generally the mere instruments of faction. Proceedings were taken against lord Portlester, the late treasurer, who was accused of having converted the revenues of the kingdom to his private uses, and was ordered to pay his arrears into the treasury on pain of forfeiture and imprisonment. It concluded with a measure of general vengeance against the Yorkists, an act of resumption of all grants since the first year of king Henry VI. Measures like these served only to inflame the violence of faction which already disturbed the English settlements in Ireland, and these rose to such a height,

that the king at last sent for the archbishop to England, to give a report of the state of the country which had been entrusted to his charge, and he appointed lord Gormanstown, a warm partizan of the Geraldines, lord deputy in his place. The Geraldines now felt themselves in the ascendancy, and it was this appearance of returning favour which probably detached the earl of Kildare from the conspiracy in favour of Perkin Warbeck. The new deputy called a parliament, which met at Drogheda, and was doubtless as zealous in favour of the Geraldines, as the preceding parliament had been against them. But the party opposed to the Geraldines refused to acknowledge its authority, and pretended to discover that it was informal and illegal. New clamours were raised against the Anglo-Irish government, and faction rose higher than ever. When king Henry demanded with somewhat of anger of his visitor, the archbishop of Dublin, how it happened that his realm of Ireland was so prone to faction and rebellion, he is said to have replied with all the prejudices that then blinded the Anglo-Irish of the pale, that it was owing to the readiness with which the English settlers formed alliances with the native Irish and conformed to their manners. The history of past years might have shown him that the miseries of Ireland arose from the turbulence of a too powerful aristocracy, with no present force to keep it in order and obedience.

The archbishop is reported, however, to have disclosed to the king circumstances which threw great suspicions on the loyalty of the earl of Kildare, with respect to the late attempt to raise up Perkin Warbeck as a competitor for his throne; and vague rumours to this effect caused the earl to hurry over to England with the professed design of confuting the charges that might be brought against him. The king, however, is said merely to have informed him of his intention of sending over to Ireland sir Edward Poynings, with full power to examine into the conduct of the great lords there, and to punish them where required; and to have told him that in Ireland alone his conduct could be examined into. Kildare appears to have been alarmed at these warnings, and to have shaped his subsequent behaviour so as to dissipate the suspicions which had been raised against him.

It is remarkable that the contemporary English chroniclers, and those who immediately followed, believed that Perkin War-

* "Le roy. . . a conclu et delibéré de mettre ordre en son pais d'Irlande."

† This document, with some others relating to the history of Perkin Warbeck, is printed in the twenty-seventh volume of the "Archæologia."

beck's hopes in Ireland lay first more among the native Irish than among the English settlers, which perhaps arose from the suspicion that he was chiefly supported by the Geraldines, whose influence over the natives was very extensive. "In Ireland," says Hall, "there be two kind of men; one soft, gentle, civil, and courteous; the other kind is clean contrary from this, for they be wild, rustical, foolish, fierce, and for their unmannerly behaviour and rude passions are called wild and savage Irishmen." "To these wild colts," he adds, "Perkin showed himself first, easily persuading them to believe that he was the same very person whom he falsely feigned and counterfeited." Accordingly, when sir Edward Poynings arrived in Ireland, and proceeded to execute one part of his commission, which is said to have been "to search and purge all such towns and places where Perkin was received, relieved, or favoured," he found that the most active supporters of the mock prince had escaped into Ulster, and that they were there harboured and protected by the native Irish. One of the first measures of the new deputy was, therefore, to march with his army against the Irish of the north.

The two Irish chiefs who had given especial provocation to the English government on this occasion, were the heads of the two sept's of O'Hanlon and Magennis. As the new lord deputy, with his more regular troops, marched into their territory, they retreated before him into the safe asylum of their bogs and forests, and left the English to plunder and burn the open country. Sir Edward Poynings had taken with him the heads of the two great Anglo-Irish families, Sir James Butler and the earl of Kildare, the latter of whom continued to be an object of suspicion, both from his past conduct and from his numerous and close alliances with the native Irish. While the troops of the lord deputy were occupied in the work of devastation in the territories of his Irish enemies, secret information was given to Poynings that Kildare was in league with them, and that he had concerted a plot with O'Hanlon to surprise and kill him. Whatever ground there may have been for this report, the deputy took the alarm, and his fears were increased when he received intelligence that the lord James fitz Gerald, the earl's brother, had risen in rebellion against the English government, and seized on the castle of Carlow, or, as it was then called, Catherlough, which he had strengthened

with a garrison of his own dependents. The lord deputy immediately made peace with O'Hanlon and Magennis, retreated from their territories, and marched with his army to Carlow, the castle of which he took after a week's siege.

The connection between the hostilities of the native Irish and the designs of Perkin Warbeck had probably less existence in fact than in the imagination of the English at home. The chief scene of turbulence continued to be the borders of Ulster and Connaught, where the O'Donnells and the O'Connors, the latter generally supported by the Burkes, were constantly at war with each other. A little before the arrival of Poynings in Ireland, O'Donnell had made an unsuccessful attempt to capture the castle of Sligo. He seems to have been contemplating greater undertakings, for next year, in August, Hugh O'Donnell paid a visit to the court of the king of Scotland, in the hope, no doubt, of securing his assistance in his views of conquest, and he was received there with great marks of honour and friendship. On his departure from Tirconnell, he had left his son, Con O'Donnell, to resume the siege of Sligo, and he had already surrounded the town with his army, when he was alarmed by the intelligence that the O'Connors of Lower Connaught were on their way to raise the siege with an army much superior in numbers to his own. Con O'Donnell, however, disdaining to retreat, marched directly to meet the attack of his enemies, and the two armies were on the point of engaging, when Hugh O'Donnell himself, who had returned from Scotland, passed one night only in his own castle of Donegal, hastened thence to Sligo, and there learnt the course of events, suddenly made his appearance. The presence of their favourite chief, who had led them on so many successful expeditions, gave new courage to the army of Tirconnell, and the O'Connors were defeated, after an obstinate struggle, in which each side had to lament the loss of several brave warriors. The victors plundered the surrounding country, and then returned to continue the siege of Sligo. Their plans, however, were soon overthrown by the arrival of another enemy, for Ulick Burke, or (the name by which he was better known) Mac William of Clanrickard, had gathered his dependents and hastened to the assistance of the O'Connors, and on his approach O'Donnell raised the siege of Sligo, and hastened home to secure

the plunder which his army had already collected. Mac William then indulged the predatory propensities of his followers, by devastating the possessions of the chiefs of Sligo who had taken part with the invaders, and he burnt a castle of the Mac Donoughs, in which fifteen persons of both sexes perished, and the Irish historians lament especially the fate of a young woman of remarkable beauty, the daughter of one of the chiefs of the district, who was in this castle, and was smothered by the smoke.

After this check the O'Donnells contented themselves for a while with petty hostilities, which have received less notice in the pages of the annalists, one of whom, however, has recorded an exploit of Con O'Donnell, which furnishes a curious picture of the turbulence of Irish manners at this period. A Scottish sept were settled in the Glynns of Antrim, whose name was Bisset, but which was better known by that of Mac Eoin, or Mac Keon. The chief of the sept, at this time, was celebrated as being the possessor of the finest woman for his wife, the handsomest steed, and the most beautiful hound, that were known in that part of the country. Con O'Donnell looked upon these treasures with that feeling of rivalry which in Ireland seldom failed to lead to some act of violence, but he at first modestly contented himself with sending a messenger to demand the steed. Mac Eoin, rather naturally, met this demand with a refusal. Whereupon Con O'Donnell assembled a small army, marched secretly, without giving any intimation of his design to Mac Eoin, upon whom he came by surprize at night, and, having made him a prisoner, he took possession at once of wife, steed, and hound, with all the rest of his property, among which was a considerable number of other valuable horses. Next day Con's people showed remarkable diligence in plundering the unoffending inhabitants of the Glynns; but Con himself performed what was doubtless considered as a noble act of gallantry, in returning to Mac Eoin's wife the property which belonged to her personally, and as soon as he had crossed the Bann, on his return westwards, "he set her husband at liberty for her." The rest of the plunder was carried away in triumph.

This was a private enterprize of Con O'Donnell, undertaken with his own familiar retainers; but on his return, he undertook one of much greater importance, with the approbation of his father Hugh, who assisted him in raising a considerable

army. With this Con crossed the Shannon, and marched southwards into Munster, where he plundered the district of Magunihiy, in the county of Mac Carthy More, and then returned safe into Donegal, without apparently having met with any serious opposition. He there made a division among his followers of the spoils collected in those two expeditions, which are stated to have occupied him altogether the space of fifteen weeks.

These great acts of hostility seem to have been regarded by the English government of Dublin with as little concern as the smaller feuds which were, at the same period, carried on among the Irish septs on every side. It had long been the policy to let the Irish destroy one another, as the surest way of promoting the English interests. Sir Edward Poynings had evidently been sent with instructions to act with vigour in reforming the abuses of the English pale, and was actuated by a strong resolution to repress the power and insolence of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, and he seized upon the accusations which had been brought against the earl of Kildare, and the rebellion of his brother, as a motive for acting rigorously against the Geraldines. After he had shown that he was not to be defied with impunity in the field, and having made himself well acquainted with the state of the province entrusted to his command, he called his first parliament to meet at Drogheda on the first Monday in December, 1495. It was a parliament memorable in the history of Ireland for the strong measures adopted in it for lessening the influence of the great lords, and relieving the commonalty from oppression; for restraining the English from "degeneracy," and reforming the manners of the pale; and for revising former laws, and regulating the proceedings of future parliaments.

The most important act of this parliament, and the one still known as Poynings' Act, was designed especially to strengthen and secure the power of the crown and break down the undue influence of the great lords, in whose hands the Irish parliaments had of late years been but the instruments of faction: it provided that, in future, no parliament should be held in Ireland, until the king's lieutenant and council had first certified to the king, under the great seal of that land, the causes and considerations for which it was to be called, as well as all such acts as it was intended to bring before it, and

that those causes, considerations, and acts, were to be approved under the great seal of England. After that approbation had been obtained, the parliament might assemble, and proceed to business; but without it, the proceedings of any parliament called in Ireland were pronounced to be null and void.

Among the other statutes passed in this parliament, one of the most important for the support of the government was that which abolished all the irregular rates and taxes by which the inhabitants of the pale had been oppressed, and substituted in their place a small land-tax payable only to the king. Other measures were taken to remove the defence of the pale from the irregular and irresponsible shoulders on which it had hitherto been allowed to rest, into the hands of the government itself. Where that defence required the quartering of soldiers, the rates of their maintenance were strictly defined, and the poundage which had been hitherto paid to the fraternity of St. George was now made payable to the king. As another precaution against the power of the great lords, who had latterly exerted considerable influence over the cities and corporate towns, it was enacted that no citizen, burgess, or freeman of any city, should receive pay or wages as the follower of any great lord, "forasmuch as the cities and great towns, and especially the city of Dublin, have of late been abused, and inordinately have demeaned themselves, contrary to their natural faith and allegiance, for the friendship and favour they did bear to divers lords and gentlemen of the land." This was, of course, an allusion to the part which the corporate towns had taken in the affair of Lambert Simnel. It was further provided that no lords or other persons, not immediately connected with corporate towns, should be admitted into their councils, as freemen or magistrates, and that none should be chosen magistrates or freemen but such as had served apprenticeships and were constant inhabitants of their respective cities and towns. The great lords were also forbidden to retain any followers, except their household officers and menial servants; and the marchers, whose peculiar position required a greater retinue, were to certify to the government the names and number of those who composed it. With especial reference to acts of which the great Anglo-Irish factions were known or suspected to have been guilty, it was now declared high treason to excite the Irish against the in-

habitants of the pale, or to raise war against the chief governor; and the great lords were further forbidden to make war or peace anywhere without express licence of the governor, to have in their possession great guns or hand-guns without similar licence, or to use the wild war-cries adopted by some of the great English families, in imitation of the natives, as watchwords of faction and riot. The constant practice in the use of bows and arrows was strictly enjoined to the commonalty of the pale; and they were forbidden, in case of murder by the natives or others, to proceed otherwise than according to the English law. Two exceptions were made in confirming the celebrated statutes of Kilkenny, which show how extensively the Irish manners and customs had extended themselves among the English settlers. One was the law which prohibited the use of the Irish language, which had now become necessarily obsolete; the other was that which forbade the subjects of the English government the riding on horses without saddles, which was the Irish custom, but this prohibition was not only ridiculous in itself, but it was now quite impossible to enforce it. For the security and defence of the marches, it was made felony to permit any enemies to pass them; all proprietors of lands on the border were compelled to be resident, or, if unavoidably absent, to leave sufficient substitutes, on pain of forfeiture of the lands; and all persons near the borders, between sixteen and sixty years of age, were to be ready to repair in suitable array for their defence, on the first warning.

There were several exceptions of greater importance to the confirmation of the other Irish statutes in the parliament. The old law for the election of a deputy by the council on the sudden vacancy in the office was superseded by a new regulation entrusting the government in that case to the lord treasurer, until a successor was appointed by the king. The nomination of sheriffs and some other officers was for the future vested in the treasurer, who was himself compelled to account annually before a committee of the council. This law was to provide against abuses like that which had been suffered in the case of lord Portlester, who had held the office during forty years, without rendering any proper account. Patents granting offices for life were at the same time abolished, and the officers of government to whom the administration of justice and the management of the reve-

nue were entrusted, were to have no authority by patent, but only at the king's pleasure. An act had been passed during the lieutenancy of the duke of York, making Ireland a sanctuary for foreigners, by ordaining that it should be treasonable to disturb any refugees in that country, by any writ, letters missive, or other such authority, from England; it had been designed originally as a protection for the partizans of the duke, and it had been more recently taken advantage of by the abettors of Simnel and Warbeck; but it was now repealed, and all receivers and maintainors of traitors were declared guilty of treason. Various other enactments in the same spirit, but of less importance, followed; and by one of them it was provided again expressly that "all statutes lately made within the realm of England," should be accepted, used, and exercised in the land of Ireland.

The feeling of hostility to the Irish aristocracy was especially shown in an act for the resumption of grants made since the last days of the reign of Edward II.; and several provisions in these statutes were especially aimed at individuals who had rendered themselves obnoxious to government. Among these the foremost were the Geraldines. The earl of Kildare, who was strongly suspected of collusion with the natives, and his brother James, who had just been in open rebellion, were both attainted of high treason, and the vengeance of parliament was extended to their adherents and kinsmen, of whom a numerous catalogue is given in the act as included in the attainder. The lord deputy refused, however, to give judgment on the earl himself, but he was sent over a prisoner to the court in England.

Having thus done the work for which he was sent into Ireland to the king's satisfaction, sir Edward Poynings returned to England towards the end of the year 1495, and was received with marked favour by his royal master. He had for a temporary successor, Henry Dean bishop of Bangor.

Meanwhile Perkin Warbeck had paid a new visit to Ireland. With assistance in ships and men furnished to him by the archduke, the duchess of Burgundy, and the king of the Romans, Perkin had attempted a descent on the coast of Kent, at the beginning of July, 1495, while king Henry was absent on a progress towards the north; but, meeting with no encouragement, he put to sea again with his ships, and suddenly landed at Cork where

his cause was still popular with the citizens, and where he was joined by the earl of Desmond, who brought an army consisting chiefly of "wild" Irish to his assistance. With the army thus raised, Perkin and Desmond proceeded to lay siege to the loyal city of Waterford, while his fleet of eleven ships blockaded the city on the side of the river. During eleven days the citizens of Waterford stood upon their defence; their courage was then increased by the approach of the lord deputy, who had raised his banner when he heard of the arrival of Warbeck, and marched with an army to their assistance; and they sallied out of their walls, and attacked their enemies with so much success that the siege was raised, and Perkin, having made his way back to Cork, soon afterwards returned to Flanders. Three of his ships were captured in his retreat from Waterford.*

The commercial treaty between England and the Low Countries, concluded in the February of the year 1496, having deprived Warbeck of all prospect of further support from that quarter, he was again driven to try his fortune in Ireland, still backed, it was said, by the strong recommendations of the duchess of Burgundy. He suddenly landed at Cork in the March of that year, and was again well received by the citizens, but he seems now to have entertained better hopes of success from the assistance of king James of Scotland, who was then actuated by hostile feelings towards Henry VII., and after a very brief stay at Cork, he proceeded directly to present himself at the court of that monarch. James appears to have been so thoroughly convinced that he really was the person he personated, that he not only took up his cause with zeal, but he bestowed upon him his near kinswoman, the young and beautiful lady Catherine Gordon, daughter of the earl of Huntley, in marriage.

Another revolution now took place in the relative position of the great lords of Ireland,

* The accounts of the sub-treasurer of Ireland, giving the details of the expenses incurred in relieving Waterford, are preserved in the British Museum (MS. Reg. 18 C. XIV). The lord deputy took the field, with the king's standard displayed, before the 23rd of July. The captains of the gunners, who raised the siege, and captured the ships, received four pounds in reward on the 21st of August. One of the captured ships, named the "Kekeout," was sold on the 14th of August, for £26 13s. 4d.; another was sold for the same sum; and the third, called "Le Mere," was sold in exchange for cloth to the amount of £40. Former historians have erroneously placed this siege under the year 1497.

which raised the Geraldines again to the chief power. The earl of Kildare still remained a prisoner in England, but he appears to have been treated leniently, and to have made a favourable impression on the king by his blunt and open manner. At length he was brought for examination before the council, and he seems to have excused himself without much difficulty, for the chief crimes laid to his charge were acts of violence at that time almost inseparable from the character of an Anglo-Irish chieftain. One of these was the burning of the church of Cashel, in consequence of a feud with the archbishop. Numerous witnesses were at hand to prove the fact, but when the first was brought forwards, the earl suddenly avowed the act, "to the great wondering and detestation of the council;" and when they asked him for his justification, "In good troth," said he, "I would never have done it, had it not been told me that the archbishop was within it." "And because," says the chronicler by whom this story is recorded, "the same archbishop was one of his busiest accusers there present, the king merrily laughed at the plainness of the nobleman, to see him allege the thing for excuse which most of all did aggravate his offence."

We are further told that the king had advised him, on the first hearing of his cause, to provide himself with good counsel, intimating a fear that he would have great need of it. The earl replied, "I will then choose the best counsel in England." "And who is that?" said the monarch. "Marry, the king himself!" replied the earl. Whereupon we are told the king laughed. And at length, when his accusers asserted in conclusion, that "all Ireland could not rule that man," we are told that the king responded with emphasis, "In that case, this man shall rule all Ireland!" Accordingly, to most people's surprise, the earl of Kildare, restored to his honours and estates, was appointed, by letters patent bearing date the 6th of August, 1496, lord deputy of Ireland, and from this moment he never ceased to be a faithful and loyal servant to the crown.

The altered spirit of the Geraldines was shown in the following year, when Perkin Warbeck, obliged at length to quit Scotland, again made his appearance at Cork. Instead of being supported by the Irish on this occasion, he narrowly escaped being captured by the earls of Desmond and Kildare, who now joined in suppressing the attempted

rebellion against the crown of Henry Tudor.* The citizens of Waterford exhibited new proofs of their zeal in the service of the king, by sending him exact information relating to Perkin's movements, and, when the latter passed over into Cornwall to make his last mad attempt against that monarch's throne, they sent four ships in pursuit of him, at the king's particular request, and he narrowly escaped falling into their hands. The sequel is well known to every reader of English history, and it need only be stated here that Warbeck's fellow sufferer at Tyburn was the same John Water of Cork, who had been his first supporter in Ireland. It is also worthy of remark, that we find mentioned among the rebels who assisted Perkin in his attempt on Kent in the July of 1495, the name of James Keating, the turbulent prior of Kilmainham, who had figured so disreputably in the affairs of Ireland at an earlier period.

The earl of Kildare returned to assume the government of Ireland at a moment when the whole island seemed to be running into irretrievable confusion. The feuds among the Irish appeared to be increasing in number and intensity, for the power of the great chiefs of the north, the dread of whom had retained some of the lesser septs in tranquillity, was in danger of being broken down by the fury of domestic contention, which raged at the same time in Tyrone and Tirconnell. In the latter country, the two sons of O'Donnell disturbed their father in his advancing age by a desolating contest for the heirship, until the latter, weary of this unnatural strife, resigned the chieftainship on the 26th of May, 1497, and three days afterwards, Con O'Donnell, who appears to have been his favourite son, was elected his successor. This new chief was forced immediately to call in the assistance of the Burkes of Lower Connaught to assist him against his brother Hugh, who defeated them in a battle, though he was soon afterwards made a prisoner by Con O'Donnell, and committed to close confinement. Elated at being thus relieved from any immediate

* This fact we learn from a letter of king Henry to sir Gilbert Talbot, dated on the 12th of September, 1497. "Trusty and welbeloved, we grete you well, signifying unto you, that wheras Perkin Warbek and his wif were lately sette ful porely to the see by the king of Scottes, and afre that landed within our land of Ireland, in the wylde Irissherie, where he had be taken by our cousins, therls of Kildare and of Desmond, if he and his said wif had not secretly stollen away."

fear of his rival, Con now invaded Lower Connaught, whither he was invited to interfere in new troubles which devastated that district, but he was defeated with great slaughter in a battle fought on the 23rd of September, and was obliged to return home with disgrace. The O'Neills of Tyrone took advantage of Con O'Donnell's reverse of fortune to invade Tirconnell, and in a sanguinary battle fought against the invaders on the 19th of October, the army of the Kinel-Connell was again defeated, and the O'Donnell himself was slain. His father Hugh O'Donnell now resumed the chieftainship of Tirconnell, and his other son having been released from prison, peace was restored to their territories, and, to use the words of the annalist, "both commenced governing their principality, and humbling their neighbours and borderers, who had begun to resist their authority, by reason of the contests of O'Donnell's sons with each other."

The chief who first provoked the English deputy was O'Brien of Thomond. Soon after his return to Ireland the earl of Kildare marched with an army against him, and took by assault the castle of Feyback, belonging to the Mac Namaras, as well as that of Ballynetty, and some other strong places. After his triumphal return to Dublin, the earl was called, as has been already stated, to repress the last rebellion in favour of Perkin Warbeck, and after the departure of that adventurer, he took possession of Cork, and placed in it a strong garrison to control the disaffection of the citizens. He then proceeded to Kinsale, which, under lord Barry, had also made a demonstration in favour of the pretender. Lord Barry himself had fled from proscription, and had been basely murdered in his retreat by his own brother. The remains of his faction submitted to the lord deputy, and gave hostages for their fidelity. The earl's enemies in the pale still continued to give him uneasiness, but he seemed changed in temper towards them, and he now conciliated them by his moderation, or weakened and divided them by crafty policy. According to the Irish authorities, he thus sowed division in the family of the Butlers, by giving his sister in marriage to Piers Butler, and supporting him in his pretensions to the chieftainship of the family in opposition to his illegitimate kinsman sir James. The latter was for a while superior in the unnatural struggle, and reduced Piers Butler to poverty and concealment, until at

length, touched by an accidental complaint which was wrung from his wife by the hardship she endured, he again took the field, slew his rival sir James, and obtained the chieftainship.

The attention of the earl was now drawn towards the north, where he appears to have courted the friendship of Hugh O'Donnell. As the territory of that chieftain became pacified, the neighbouring state of Tyrone began to be torn by the factious contentions of its chiefs. On the murder of Con O'Neill, the earl's brother-in-law, by his brother Henry in 1493, the chieftainship had been divided between Henry and another brother, Daniel O'Neill. The sons of the murdered chieftain, Turlough and Con, had long meditated revenge, when, in 1498, they suddenly fell upon the murderers in the house of one of the O'Neills in the county of Armagh, in which district they had probably taken refuge, and slew him. A new war broke out in Tyrone when this deed was noised abroad, and the friends of Turlough and Con having laid siege to the castle of Dungannon, were surprised by the partizans of the slaughtered chieftain, and defeated. O'Donnell then interfered in support of the sons of Con O'Neill, and, invading Tyrone, gained a battle against their rivals, and took the castle of Castlemoyle, from which he carried away "seventeen suits of armour." The earl of Kildare at the same time made war in support of his nephews, and invaded Tyrone from the south, and being joined by a large power of the Irish of Ulster, he again laid siege to Dungannon, the stronghold of the opposite party. It was at length taken, we are assured, by means of the "great guns" which the lord-lieutenant had brought against it; and among the numerous prisoners who were liberated from its dungeons, were a son of O'Donnell and several of the O'Neills of the faction which was on this occasion victorious. The earl left the town in the possession of one of these, Donnell O'Neill, and proceeded to the castle of Omagh, which he also took, and compelled its keeper, Niall the son of Art O'Neill to submit to his nephews and give hostages for his obedience. Tyrone being thus pacified, the earl and O'Donnell returned to their respective homes in triumph.

Early next year the friendship between Kildare and O'Donnell was drawn closer by a visit of the northern chieftain to the lord deputy in the English territory, and the earl further conciliated him by delivering to

him his son in fosterage. On his return, O'Donnell was called upon to put down an insurrection of one of his own family, and then he and the earl joined in an invasion of Connaught to put an end to the disorders of that province, which had arisen from the disputes between the O'Connors, Mac Dermots, and O'Kellys. The earl marched into Roscommon, and captured the castles of Athleague, Tulsk, Roscommon, and Castle-reagh, and delivered them into the hands of the Irish chieftains whom he had come to support. But after the departure of the English, the chief of Clanrickard, Mac William Burke, drew out his forces, and recaptured the castles of Athleague and Tulsk for the opposite faction. O'Donnell proceeded against the Mac Dermots of Moylurg, but, finding the pass of the Curlew mountains occupied against him, he made a circuitous march, crossed the Shannon near the castle of Leitrim, and entered Moylurg in the rear of the army of the Mac Dermots. The latter, terrified at the desolation which the army of Tirconnell spread through their territory, made the best peace they could, and a temporary pacification was effected throughout Connaught. In the year 1500, O'Donnell and Kildare again turned their united efforts against the rivals of Turlough O'Neill in Tyrone, who were supported by the O'Neills of Clannaboy. O'Donnell marched first to Dungannon, and burnt the town, and, after having returned home with his plunder, proceeded again into Tyrone, and joined the earl at Kinard, the castle of the sons of John Boy O'Neill, which they captured, and delivered to Turlough. Six weeks after this, Donnell O'Neill, one of the opponents of the sons of Con O'Neill, having captured a castle, of which he had been deprived by the other party, took Turlough himself, who happened to be in it, prisoner, upon which the civil war in Tirconnell broke out with greater violence than ever. In 1501, this war extended into Orgial, where Turlough O'Neill was slain in a battle with the Mac Mahons.

The disorders in Tyrone seem now to have subsided, while they were breaking out again in the north of Connaught. A sanguinary battle occurred in 1501 between the Maguires and Mac Mahons in the mountains of Sleive Baugh in Fermanagh. Similar feuds devastated the neighbouring territories of Leitrim and Sligo, and the castle of Sligo was captured "by means of ladders" by one party of the O'Connors from the other. In

Roscommon, the O'Connors and the Mac Dermots were again in arms; while in Munster, Turlough O'Brien, lord of Thomond was ravaging the county of Limerick. In 1502, the sons of Turlough O'Neill were obliged to make head against a multitude of opponents, and a feud between the Maguires and the Mac Mahons led to the invasion of Monaghan by O'Donnell. The chief of the sept of the Maguires died at Enniskillen in 1503, leaving his territory to be disputed by several claimants to the succession; while, in Connaught, Mac William of Clanrickard was engaged in fierce hostilities with the O'Kellys.

None of these feuds escaped the attention of Kildare, who kept the English frontiers in a far better state of defence than any of his predecessors for many years, and who was ready to resist every attack of his neighbours, and to take advantage of their dissensions. In the summer of the year last mentioned he led an English army into Antrim, captured Carrickfergus, and destroyed the castle of Belfast, and gave other assistance to his kinsmen, the sons of Turlough O'Neill, against their enemies of Clannaboy; but after his departure the garrison of Carrickfergus was defeated by the opposite party. The troubles of Connaught were increasing during this year, and in 1504 it merged into a violent contention between the Burkes of Clanrickard and the O'Kellys, in the course of which the latter sustained a severe defeat, after which Mac William of Clanrickard took and destroyed three of their castles. Melaghlin O'Kelly, unable any longer to make head against his enemies, hurried to the English pale, to seek the assistance of the earl of Kildare.

A private quarrel is said to have existed between the earl of Kildare and the head of the powerful sept of the "degenerate" Burkes. Ulick or Mac William of Clanrickard had married one of the earl's daughters, whom he subsequently treated with harshness and neglect, and the expostulations of the father gave rise to recriminations which had ended in bitter animosity. Kildare's warlike expeditions had as frequently been dictated by his own private friendships and enmities as by the interests of the English government, and on this occasion his private feud with the chieftain of Clanrickard led him to espouse with warmth the cause of the persecuted O'Kellys.

The oldest Irish allies of the Burkes of Clanrickard were the O'Briens of Thomond,

and these now marched to the aid of Mac William with all their forces, accompanied with their neighbours the Mac Namaras, the O'Carrolls, and other septs. The O'Connors of Connaught also ranged themselves under his standard in great force; and altogether the army now raised to resist this invasion of Connaught was looked upon by the natives as the largest body of Irish that had ever been brought into the field since the English first set their foot on the soil. Under the banner of the earl of Kildare were ranged, side by side with the English army of Leinster, the forces of Tirconnell under O'Donnell and his son, the Mac Dermots of Moylurg, some of the O'Neills (the rest were retained at home by their private feuds), most of the other septs of the North, such as the Magennises, the Mac Mahons, the O'Harlons, the O'Reillys, and the O'Farrells, with O'Connor Faly, the O'Kellys, and even the Burkes of Mayo, who are reported to have been among the most bitter in their animosity against their own kindred. The whole island looked on in anxious expectation of the result of this deadly contest, for, from the composition of the two armies, it seemed as though the ancient rivalry of the Leath-Conn and the Leath-Mogha was again brought into the field.

Whatever may have been the grounds of the quarrel, Kildare marched into the field with the banner of the English pale, accompanied with several of its great lords, lay and spiritual, and with the mayor of Dublin, who brought a body of his armed citizens to the war; and his Irish allies are said to have been amazed at the parade of lawyers and ecclesiastics who accompanied him on his mission of destruction. The combined army marched direct into the county of Galway, till they arrived within about eight miles of that city, when they came in sight of their enemies, who had collected their whole force along the hill of Knock-tuagh, or, as it is now called, Knockdoe, from whence they stretched into the neighbouring plain. It is pretended that some of the lords of the pale, alarmed by the vast numbers of their enemies, and apprehensive of the results which might arise from a war into which the English pale was dragged from no consideration of its own interests, at this moment urged the earl to make peace. But the latter had now advanced too far to retreat, and he formed his army in order of battle. The contest began on the 19th of

August, and continued for some time with great fury. The attack was made by the army of Clanrickard, who rushed furiously upon the lord-lieutenant's ranks. But it appears that the men of Leinster had profited by their long practice with the English bow, and this weapon they now used with terrible effect upon their assailants, who at length fell back in confusion. The whole army of the north then rushed upon them, and drove them from the field with immense slaughter. This is the best notion of the battle we can form from the different accounts of the Irish annalists, who give various accounts of the loss of the vanquished, some estimating the numbers of their slain at no less than nine thousand. This is probably much exaggerated, but it is certain that the terrible slaughter in the battle of Knock-tuagh entirely broke the power of some of the most troublesome septs of the Irish of the south. O'Brien of Thomond was among those who fell in the battle, and the two sons of Mac William of Clanrickard were made prisoners and delivered to the earl of Kildare. According to the common accounts, not a single Englishman was slain, though the loss sustained by their Irish allies is said to have been considerable.

It is said that the earl of Kildare proposed to march immediately from the field of battle to the town of Galway, but that he was dissuaded by O'Donnell, who advised him to encamp on Knock-tuagh till the following day, in order to attend to the dead and wounded, and to gather in their men who were scattered in the pursuit. On the following day they accordingly proceeded to Galway, and took possession of the town without opposition. There the English and Irish leaders remained some time feasting and rejoicing; after which they marched to Athenry, which was likewise surrendered into their hands. As no further enemy appeared in the field, the invading forces separated after the capture of Athenry, O'Donnell marching northward to his own home, while the earl of Kildare and the army of Leinster returned into the English pale. It was Hugh O'Donnell's last expedition, for this distinguished chieftain, whom the Irish annalists distinguish by the title of "the full moon of the hospitality and nobility of the north," died on the 11th of July in the following year, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, and the forty-fourth of his reign. He was succeeded by his son Hugh Oge O'Donnell, who continued his friendship

with Kildare, and gave proof of his worthiness to rule over Tirconnell by invading Tyrone, burning Dungannon, and carrying home with him a great booty, after which he was inaugurated to the chieftainship.

The battle of Knock-tuagh, for whatever cause it was fought, proved of the utmost importance to the English interests in Ireland, and may be considered as the date from which the English government recovered its superiority in the island. The archbishop of Dublin was sent over to England, to announce to the king the total overthrow of his Irish enemies, and Henry testified his satisfaction by bestowing a vacant garter on his victorious deputy. The latter was now left at liberty to build castles and strengthen the English settlement, for even the most troublesome enemies of the English government, the degenerate English of Connaught and Munster, were terrified into submission.

Among the Irish, the following years were distinguished only by some of those lesser feuds from which the native septs were never free, and which hardly deserve notice in our history. It was not until the closing year of the reign of which we are now speaking, 1509, that the increasing disorders in Tyrone led to a new invasion of that district by the earl of Kildare, who was called to the assistance of his nephews, the sons of Con O'Neill. When he joined them at Dungannon, he found that they had already captured that fortress, and he contented himself with marching to the castle of Omagh, which he took and destroyed, and then returned home.

During the latter part of the reign of Henry VII. much had been done towards raising the English power in Ireland and depressing that of the native chiefs, but it had been the work of violence rather than of conciliation; very little was effected towards healing the grievances under which that country had so long suffered, or reconciling the natives to the English rule. Kildare was a man of action but not of counsel; he

was respected by the natives rather as the warlike chief of the most powerful sept in the island, than as the deputy of the English monarch. Although he gave the inhabitants of the pale a degree of security from the inroads of the Irish which they had not enjoyed before, he did nothing towards reforming their domestic government or improving their social condition. Few acts of legislation of any importance were passed during his lieutenancy; and the law-making government of sir Edward Poynings seemed to have fixed for the present the Anglo-Irish constitution. Three short parliaments were held during the last twelve years of this reign, the only act of the first being to apply to Ireland an act recently passed in England for the punishment of customers, controllers, and searchers; the second of these parliaments granted certain taxes on merchandize and land as a subsidy for ten years; and the only act of the third was to revive the same subsidy. Although no new acts of legislation were passed, many of the old ones were gradually falling into disuse, especially those against intermarriage with the natives and fostering, for the intermixture of the two races had been going on rapidly during the present reign, influenced no doubt in some measure by the example of the earl of Kildare and others of the great English lords. This naturally led to an increase in the "degeneracy," which had been the object of so many prohibitive laws, and which was still loudly complained of as constituting one of the greatest dangers which threatened the stability of the English government. It was not even yet understood that the only effectual defence against this danger would be to confer the full benefits of the English laws upon the Irish equally with the English; but a measure like this could not be carried out with advantage in the relative position in which the two races had then been placed by the bad government and mistaken legislation of the English during several ages.

BOOK III.

THE AGE OF THE REFORMATION.



CHAPTER I.

IRELAND AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII.; THE EARLS OF KILDARE; GOVERNMENT OF THE EARL OF SURREY.

INCE the time when the second Richard had embarked on his unfortunate expedition against Mac Murrough, a great change had swept over the face of England and Europe, yet the physiognomy of Ireland remained the same; it laboured under the same grievances, and was torn to pieces by the same disorders. Elsewhere, the feudal system of the middle ages was at this moment crumbling to pieces, and the whole system of church and state was on the eve of an entire regeneration; yet the old state of things in Ireland seemed to be taking deeper root, and becoming more inveterate, as it advanced in age. So little indeed had been done towards effecting that improvement in the condition and morals of the Irish which had been promised in the transactions between pope Adrian and king Henry II., that the Irish were in a worse condition in every respect at the beginning of the sixteenth century than in the twelfth. This, however, must be attributed in a great measure to the circumstance that the succession of political and social revolutions which had followed each other in England, had so weakened the power of the crown in its distant influence, that Ireland was left almost to the government of chance, and to those worst of all disorders which arise from a nominal sovereignty, which takes responsibility without power. We are now arrived at the period when the English crown resumed its superiority, and was beginning to crush the different subordinate powers which had been counteracting its operations.

At the commencement of his reign, king Henry VIII. paid little attention to the

affairs of Ireland, and the old earl of Kildare was allowed to retain his office of lord deputy without any question as to his conduct or policy. This veteran governor seemed to increase in activity as he advanced in age, for during the closing years of his life he was incessantly occupied in military expeditions against the various Irish septs who rebelled against his authority. Before the new king had been many months on the throne, the lord deputy collected the army of Leinster, English and Irish, for he had now compelled the latter to submit to his government, and marched into the heart of Munster, where he began by erecting a castle on the strong rock of Carrigkettle, at Kiltelly in Limerick, "in despite," as the chronicler tells us, "of the Irish." He was there joined by his northern ally O'Donnell, who had marched a small army through Meath to his assistance; and he then proceeded southwards into the county of Cork, where they took the castle of Kanturk, and plundered the surrounding country. Thence they went still further into Desmond, skirting the lake of Killarney, and capturing the castles of Pailis and Castlemaine, laying waste the country as far as the western coast. On their way back they proceeded by Limerick, where they were joined by the Geraldines of Munster and some of the native chiefs; but here O'Brien of Thomond, with the Mac Namaras and other sept, joined by the Clanrickards, had assembled a large army to oppose their march. An obstinate battle was fought on the banks of the Shannon, which appears to have had no very decided result; for the English army having suffered considerably, and being embarrassed with their plunder, marched away next day, and reached home without sustaining any further loss. O'Donnell is said to have

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